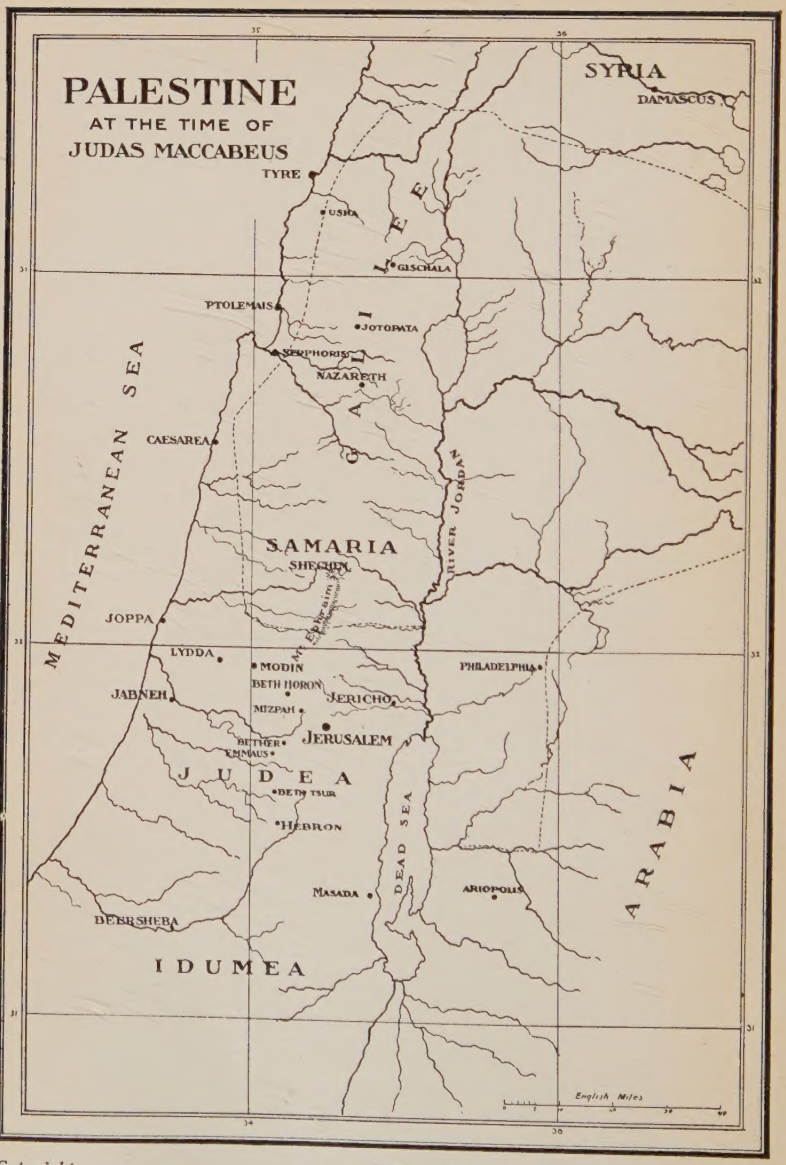
THE STORY OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

VOL. I

JACK M. MYERS

THE STORY OF
THE JEWISH PEOPLE



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THE STORY OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

BEING A HISTORY OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE SINCE BIBLE TIMES

WITH MAPS AND NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS

IN TWO VOLUMES

BY

JACK M. MYERS

WITH A PREFATORY NOTE

BY THE

VERY REV. THE CHIEF RABBI

VOL. I

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DEDICATED

TO THE MEMORY OF MY PARENTS

ALICE MYERS AND ASHER I. MYERS

AND TO THE

Boys and girls who, in reading this book, may be interested in the story of a remarkable people. Being Jews, they may feel greater pride of race and faith when they learn something of their ancestors who lived noble lives and died heroic deaths in days of old. Or, being non-Jews, they may perhaps see in clearer and more accurate perspective the real meaning of Jewish history—the history of Judaism and those who have upheld its banner in the fierce blast of prejudice, ill-will, and persecution through the ages.

PREFACE

THIS little book is intended to meet what has been a long-felt want in this country, viz. a post-Biblical Jewish History Reader, for use in both school and home, sufficiently moderate in price to be used as a school text-book, sufficiently simple and interesting in style to be adapted to the needs and capacities of young people between, say, the ages of eleven and seventeen, and yet such as can be read with profit and interest by older persons.

It is generally agreed that the teaching of history is often a great factor in arousing and retaining the interest of a child; for the examples of the past should be a stimulus to right-doing in the present.

In this respect the Jewish teacher has an advantage which few of those of other faiths possess. For what history is more fascinating and interesting than Jewish history? In the hands of a skilful teacher, it should be possible to group much general Jewish teaching round Jewish historical lessons, and, by thus securing the interest of the children in things Jewish, do something to stimulate their keenness for their people and their faith.

It is hoped, then, that this book will make it easier for this to be done, and that, placed in the hands of the children, and supplemented by the work of the teacher, it will do something to induce pride of race and adherence to religion in those who are to be the standard-bearers of Israel and Israel's faith in the days to come.

To non-Jews, too, the story of the "People of the Book" since Bible times may not be without interest, for the continued existence of the Jewish race through the long ages of persecution and exile is, perhaps, one of the most remarkable things which history has to tell. A considerable portion of the first volume is descriptive

of the times when Jesus lived, and this may, perhaps, add to its interest.

The author has had no other qualifications for the somewhat difficult task he has undertaken, than much sympathy with and some knowledge of the requirements of those for whom this book is written, acquired during several years of work as a manager of schools and classes attended by Jewish children. He has not produced a work involving scholarship which he does not possess, or original research which he is not qualified to make. The aim throughout has been to endeavour to make and to keep the reader *interested*. And so this book takes the form of sketches rather than a scientific history; it deals with the romance rather than the philosophy of Jewish history. Thus, certain events and some famous names have been omitted; legend is sometimes confused with fact; while other events and periods receive much more space than they deserve from their importance in proportion to the whole history, because they lend themselves to picturesque treatment, and are likely to appeal to the imagination of the reader.

The author has had to come to a decision on many matters on which scholars are divided and on which he is not qualified to judge. To give but two examples—the view of Dr. Büchler with regard to the Sanhedrin has been adopted as against that of Schürer, Smith, and others, as has that of Weiss, Hoffmann, and others with regard to the interpolations in the *Pirké Aboth* between sayings attributed to Hillel. No doubt, however, errors of fact as well as of judgment have crept in, and the author will be grateful for a notification of any that may be detected, and, indeed, for suggestions with regard to the book generally.

In view of his own limitations the author has had to rely very largely on the work of others, and he has not hesitated to adapt for his younger readers passages in books intended for older persons. Indeed, the book represents more the synthesis of existing works and help rendered by kind friends than anything original. A list of those books which have been most useful to the author is given elsewhere. The very kind personal assistance which the author has received has been of two kinds—

the verification of facts, and the revision of style to suit the capacities of those for whom the book is intended. He desires to offer his grateful thanks to the following ladies and gentlemen who, by suggestion, encouragement, and criticism, have been of very material assistance :—Miss Bella Sidney Woolf, Miss Esther Myers, Miss C. Green, Miss L. Groenewoud, the Rev. Dayan M. Hyamson, the Rev. Dayan A. Feldman, the Rev. H. S. Lewis, the Rev. A. Chaikin, the Rev. S. Lipson, the Rev. H. Shandel, Mr. Israel Abrahams, Prof. Israel Gollancz, Dr. A. Büchler, Dr. A. Eichholz, Dr. M. Epstein, Mr. L. G. Bowman, Mr. H. E. Salomons, Mr. I. Goldston, Mr. Paul Goodman, Mr. G. Chaikin, Mr. S. J. Fay, Mr. Albert I. Myers, Mr. Norman Bentwich, and Mr. Leon Simon. To Dr. M. Berlin of Manchester, for his painstaking revision of the whole MS., the author's sincere thanks are especially tendered.

It should be stated, however, that complete responsibility for a somewhat imperfect task is borne by the author, and none attaches to any of those whose names have been mentioned.

JACK M. MYERS.

Lewis House, Philpot Street,
London, E.

PREFATORY NOTE

"REMEMBER the days of old, consider the year of many generations." This was the counsel which the faithful leader addressed to his people in his immortal Swan-song. If Moses deemed it wise to remind Israel of his past when the nation was as yet in its youth, how needful is such an admonition to us, who, by Divine mercy, have been preserved as a religious communion for a period of upwards of 3000 years since those words were spoken. We happily possess our Sacred Scripture as the record of the story of our people during Bible times, and some knowledge of this is imparted to our children in our schools and in our religion classes. But there is reason to fear that our history from the close of the Bible canon is, as a rule, an unknown land. And yet how full is it of fascinating interest!

These annals are not, like so many portions of universal history, a complex chain of bloodshed and a tangled web of intrigue. With the exception of a brief period, it is not a history of kings or demagogues, of armies, camarillas and cabals, of rebellions and revolutions, nor the record of selfish dynastic ambition, nor of encroachment upon popular rights. It is the history of a people, a great but unfortunate people, upholding its faith, despite all the dangers and temptations that assail it. It is the history of a literature not unworthy of those who are termed "the people of the Book." We have not been destitute of information on the subject. To name but two works bearing on post-Biblical History—Professor Graetz's monumental work and Lady Magnus' popular book "About the Jews since Bible Times."

Mr. Jack M. Myers' "Story of the Jewish People," of which this is the first volume, is a welcome addition to our scanty Anglo-Jewish literature. I have only had time to

glance at the book, but I have been glad to note that it appeals to the young by the vividness of its descriptions, by its picturesque portraiture of a day in Jerusalem, and its pleasant stories of the Rabbis.

I believe that this History will prove a valuable help to teachers. I also hope that it will stimulate many a hallowing thought on the Sabbath day.

It has been said that a people that cares nothing for its ancestors is likely to care but little for its posterity. We must not allow this reproach to attach to us. Even as in former times our people, in days of danger, drew comfort, strength, and inspiration from our ancient records, so we ought still to dwell lovingly upon our wondrous past with its record of Divine preservation, and apply its teachings to the manifold perplexities and anxieties of the present.

H. ADLER.

NOTE TO VOL. I

It has been thought desirable to commence this volume with one of the most inspiring periods of Jewish history —that of the Maccabean revolt. The introductory chapter will serve to give a bird's-eye view of the events leading up to the opening chapter, and provides a skeleton which can be filled in, if necessary, by the teacher. The picture of life in Jerusalem at the time of Herod, and the Stories of the Rabbis, occupy nearly two-thirds of the first volume. It is hoped, however, that the value of these portions of the book in awakening and retaining the interest of the reader and stimulating the imagination will justify their length. All the sayings, anecdotes, &c., included in this section have been taken from Talmudic, Midrashic, or Biblical sources. The Rabbis chosen have been selected as being some of the most interesting personalities, and lack of space has prevented the number being more representative. Some chapters (*e.g.* Chapter xii., dealing with the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes, and those on the Talmud) will be found more advanced in style than others; but those, it is suggested, can be reserved for older children. The map of Palestine and the plan of the Temple have been specially drawn. The second volume will bring the history up to modern times.

J. M. M.

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THE STORY OF
THE JEWISH PEOPLE

INTRODUCTION

The earliest times.

In the very earliest times the ancestors of the Jewish people lived in Asia, in the country we know by the name of Mesopotamia, occupying themselves mainly in agriculture. Some of them journeyed to Egypt in the days when the Bible tells us of Joseph and Pharaoh. Later they wandered across the desert into Palestine (then known as Canaan), and there there were afterwards founded at first one kingdom and later the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel. The inhabitants of Israel were taken captive by the King of Assyria in the year 721 B.C., and never returned to their native country. Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, took the inhabitants of Judah captive in the year 586 B.C.

"By the rivers of Babylon."

"Build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them. Take ye wives . . . and seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives" (Jer. xxix. 5–7). This was the message which the prophet Jeremiah sent to those Israelites who had been taken captive to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar. They were naturally very sad, as, oppressed in the cities of their exile, or wandering in the desert, they bewailed the ruin of Jerusalem, their holy city; but withal they derived comfort from the stirring words of their prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel. The great prophet Isaiah calls the exiled nation "the man of sorrows" (Isa. liii. 3), and as the ancient Israelite sits by the willow tree on the banks of the river Euphrates, singing

his song of grief and hope, we recognise in him the ancestor of the people who were afterwards to suffer the agonies of the Crusades, the Spanish Inquisition, and the Russian massacres. "By the rivers of Babylon," they cried (in Psalm cxxxvii.), "there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. . . . How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning."

The return to Palestine.

Some of them did not have to sing the "Lord's song" in a strange land very long, for Babylon was captured by Cyrus, the Persian King, in the year 539 B.C., and two years later (537 B.C.) he permitted a number of the Israelites to return to Palestine under the leadership of Zerubbabel, who belonged to the Royal House of David.

OLD PERSIAN COINS USED IN PALESTINE

They restored the Temple under the guidance of the prophets Zechariah and Haggai, and built again the cities that had been laid waste in the war that led up to the captivity. Later on in the year 458 another smaller band of captives returned with Ezra "the Scribe."

Ezra the Scribe.

Ezra was very disappointed that his people no longer observed the old customs and ceremonies, and he set to work with Nehemiah, the cup-bearer to the Persian King, who, like Zerubbabel, was a member of the Royal House of Judah, to teach the Law of Moses to the people, and persuade them to keep it. He forced the people to give up their heathen wives, and introduced many alterations in the sad state of affairs which he found in Jerusalem.

The Men of the Great Synagogue.

Ezra gathered round him a school of followers and pupils, who were afterwards called "the men of the Great Synagogue." They had three sayings—

"Be merciful in judgment,"
"Make many disciples," and
"Put a fence round the Law."

They were the first of the great teachers who explained the Law as laid down in the Bible, and they were the forerunners of the great Rabbis, about whom we shall afterwards hear a great deal. The last of the men of the Great Synagogue was Simon the Just, who died in the year 300 B.C. He was High Priest and a great teacher. One of his sayings has become famous: "The world rests upon three things—the Torah, divine service, and acts of charity."

Alexander the Great.

For about two hundred years the people of Judea lived in peace. In the year 332 B.C. Alexander the Great, the famous Macedonian King, who conquered the whole of the world which was then known, also subdued Palestine.

A COIN OF SELEUCUS I., ONE OF THE GENERALS OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT

Both Alexander and his immediate successors treated the Jews well, but this was not to last very long. After Alexander's death his empire was divided up among his generals, two of whom took Egypt and Syria respectively.

Egypt and Syria fight for Palestine.

Palestine, being between Egypt and Syria, became the battle-ground on which the Kings of these two countries fought. Sometimes the one would gain the day; at other times his opponent would be victorious. For a long time the Kings of Egypt gained the upper hand. In consequence many Jews settled in the Egyptian city of Alexandria, and acquired many of the Greek customs in vogue there, some of which were also introduced into Jerusalem. But, at the time when our story opens, it was the King of Syria to whom the Jewish people were subject. His name was Antiochus IV., and it is about this man, who had such an important influence on the subsequent history of the Jewish people, that we shall now hear.

CHAPTER I

175–169 B.C.

ANTIOCHUS IV., KING OF SYRIA

A message from the Roman Senate.

"THE Roman Senate must have an answer before you leave this circle!" So spake the Roman envoy to Antiochus IV., King of Syria, before the walls of Alexandria, the great city of Egypt. The King was besieging the city, and a messenger had come to order him, in the name of the mighty empire of Rome, to give up the siege. Antiochus had asked for time to consider the demand, whereupon the envoy had drawn a circle in the sand around the King, and uttered the words with which this chapter opened. This was not the first time that the Syrian King had come into contact with the Romans, for he had lived for thirteen years in Rome, at a time when that city had already become the most powerful in the world. He knew, therefore, that he could not trifle with the message which he had received, and so he gave up the siege of Alexandria, and returned home to the capital of Syria—the city of Antioch, to which his ancestors had given their name.

Antiochus "Epiphanes" and "Epimanes."

Antiochus was called by two names. By his flatterers he was named *Epiphanes*—"the God visible"; by those who were not afraid of referring to his bad qualities he was styled *Epimanes*—"the Madman." In Rome he had learnt the art of government, and formed the ambitious ideas of extending his kingdom from which he received the former title. But it was in Rome, too, that he must have obtained a knowledge of how to trample on other people and despise their customs, a knowledge which he was afterwards to use with such unhappy results to the Jewish people and himself.

He merited the nickname "the Madman," however, chiefly on account of his curious behaviour in his capital—Antioch. For he would play practical jokes in the public streets and baths, now wrestling with the bathers on the slippery marble of the baths, now riding on a pony and jesting in front of the people in the midst of a stately procession. On the other hand, he had a rough good humour; he mixed with the common people of his capital, and would talk with the workmen in the market-place as if he were a beggar rather than a king. Sometimes an impulse of lavish generosity would seize him, and he would then scatter gold and dice, dates and sweet-smelling ointment, broadcast among the populace. Antiochus had been to Athens (where he was a member of the Parliament), and he tried to imitate in Palestine, as everywhere else in his kingdom, the splendour of the Grecian games. Remembering his period of office at Athens, he once disguised himself as an ordinary citizen, and canvassed the people of Antioch for election as magistrate of the market. He was a heavy drinker, and when he was under the influence of drink (as often happened) he indulged in the oddest pranks. Often, for instance, when he heard of parties of young people feasting together, he would break in upon them, with horn and bagpipe, to their terror and instant flight.

Practical jokes.

It was this extraordinary man with whom the Jewish people now came into contact. When Antiochus retired from the siege of Alexandria, he resolved that he would try and unite all the nations composing his empire into one whole, in order that he might successfully meet his Roman foes on equal terms. He thought—and here he was really Epimanes, "the Madman"—that the only way to do this was to force all of them to adopt one religion. If everything had been quiet and peaceful in Judea, he might, perhaps, not have troubled to interfere in the affairs of the Jewish people, so long as they paid their taxes and did not trouble him. But unfortunately there was at the time bitter strife between various members of the priestly houses, who were more intent on securing power for themselves than preserving the national religion, and this was soon brought to the notice of Antiochus by his councillors and by parties to lawsuits. This dissension was due very

Antiochus's resolve.

largely to the adoption by many of the Jews of Greek habits and ideas, which were strenuously opposed as tending to break up the nation and its old customs.

Greek customs in Judea.

Throughout the course of their history the Jewish people have come into contact with most of the great nations who have influenced the world. When we read of them, as our story is told, it will be well for us to remember that many of those races have passed away, whilst Israel still survives, to bear witness to their past and to fulfil the mission which has been entrusted to them. One of these peoples was the Greeks, and three hundred years before our present way of reckoning, or over two thousand years ago, Greek customs and practices began to be introduced into Palestine and among those Jews who had settled in Alexandria and other cities of Egypt. Till the Jews came into contact with the Greeks, they felt themselves almost alone among the nations. The pagan peoples around them were all worshippers of idols, and so the Jews felt, with their faith in God, that they were far superior to these grovellers before animals and images of stone and wood which their own hands had shaped. The Greeks, however, had a splendid culture, and many of the more highly educated among them had more elevated views about God and His relations to man. Some of the Jews felt that now at any rate there was a people that was their equal, and they became attracted towards the Greeks and Greek ideas. Many of the old Hebrew names were translated into Greek. Several Jews received the Greek name Alexander, Joshua was transformed into Jesus or Jason, and many of the towns in Palestine were given Greek names (such as Philadelphia, Ariopolis, Ptolemais).

Two sides to the picture.

Moreover, the Greeks were the great artists of those days. Their beautiful houses, their wonderful paintings and sculpture, their music and literature, won the admiration of many Jews. But there was another side to the picture. Many of the Greeks taught that people should obtain as much pleasure as they could from life, regardless of other considerations. They drank wine immoderately, introduced games of all kinds, as being among the serious things of life, and were extravagant in many ways. Above all they did not recognise that happiness depended on

obedience to moral rules; that, as religion must affect all the actions of life, those moral rules were an essential part of religion. Instead, they worshipped "pleasure," and thought that religion merely consisted in fine ceremonies.

Antigonus of Socho.

Although a great many of the Jews naturally looked with horror on the adoption of the Greek mode of living, there were some who knew how to combine the teachings of Greek philosophy, which had much in it that was good and inspiring, with Jewish teaching. One of these was Antigonus of Socho, a saying of whom has become famous: "Be not like those servants who serve their masters in the hope of reward, but be like those servants who serve their masters without expectation of reward, and the favour of Heaven be upon you." He thus taught the importance of doing one's duty in life for its own sake —not merely on account of what one obtains in return.

Rival priests.

The Jews who were most strongly opposed to the introduction of the new Greek customs, became known as "Chassidim"—חֲסִידִים, or "pious ones." Many of the priests became followers of the Greek habits, and it was owing to a quarrel between rival priests that Antiochus first interfered in Judea. The quarrels were, however, not always between those who were sincere supporters of the Greek customs on the one side and those who opposed them on the other. Onias the High Priest had a brother named Joshua. This brother had been enamoured of Greek ways, became a leading member of the Greek party, and took a prominent part in organising the Greek sports and games. Being ashamed of his good, time-honoured Jewish name (so full of religious omen, for it denotes "helped by God"), he assumed the Greek form Jason. He also caused the young men of priestly families and other young nobles to wear the Greek cap, as a sign that they had adopted the Greek customs. "And thus," says the ancient chronicler to whom we owe these facts, "there was an extreme of Greek fashions and the advance of a strange religion by reason of the exceeding wickedness of Jason, that ungodly man and no High Priest" (2 Macc. iv. 13).

Bidding for the High Priesthood.

Knowing that Antiochus stood in need of and would do much for money, Jason offered him a large sum if the King would make him High Priest. Antiochus readily granted the request. But Jason was not to remain High

Priest long. A thoroughly bad man, named Menelaus, outbid Jason by three hundred talents of silver, and Antiochus, who would evidently do anything for money, appointed him to the sacred office. Menelaus belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, and therefore should not have been appointed High Priest, as the holders of that position were only chosen from the descendants of Aaron. Being a member of the Greek party, he was opposed to the old Jewish customs and ceremonies, and his appointment, therefore, seemed scandalous. Menelaus and his followers were not content to imitate such men as Antigonus of Socho, and combine all that was good in Judaism and in Greek thought, but they rode roughshod over all the traditional sentiments and susceptibilities of the Jewish nation, and (like other men in other religions in more recent times) used infamous means for obtaining power to force their ideas on an unwilling nation.

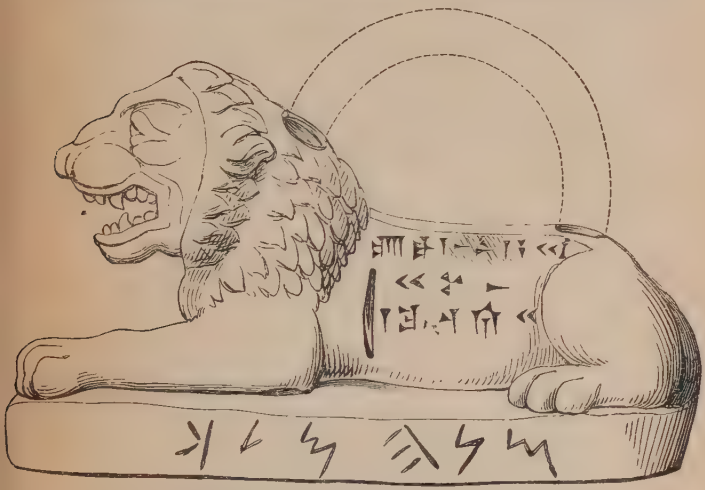
Menelaus's sacrilege.

But worse was to follow. Not possessing the amount of money he had promised to give Antiochus, Menelaus was summoned by the King to appear before him and explain the reason of his default. While he was away he induced his brother, who was acting as High Priest in his absence, to take some of the holy vessels from the Temple (many of them being made of gold, and therefore of great value) to make up the difference. The old priest, Onias, heard of this, and accused Menelaus of robbing the Temple, which was considered a very serious offence, even among the Greeks. Menelaus was equal to the emergency, for he induced Onias to venture away from the temple of the Greek god Apollo in the city of Daphne, near Antioch (where he had sought safety from his unscrupulous brother), and caused him to be killed. The thefts from the Temple and the murder of Onias naturally caused much indignation in Jerusalem. The people threatened to kill the brother of Menelaus, and met the soldiers who supported him with stones and sticks and burning ashes. Menelaus then accused the people of rebellion. He informed Antiochus that his enemies the Jews were secretly supporters of the King of Egypt, who was then carrying on hostilities against Antiochus, and that an outcome of the Jewish religion was the fact that the Jews despised Antiochus and the Syrian people. By means of bribes and promise of support,

Menelaus won the King to his side, and he continued to act as High Priest.

While Antiochus was away engaged in attacking Egypt, a report was spread that he had been killed. Thereupon Jason entered Jerusalem with an army, after having defeated the soldiers of Menelaus. He was not to remain there long, however, for Antiochus returned from Egypt, and suddenly attacked Jerusalem. The frightened people

Antiochus attacks Jerusalem.



LION WEIGHT USED IN ASSYRIA IN ANCIENT TIMES

were hewn down in the streets as they fled before him. Sorrow and horror spread through the country, for the Holy City was now occupied by a Grecian garrison.

But what filled the Jews with terror and indignation more than the terrible massacre which went on before their eyes was the sight of the heathen King being led by Menelaus ("who worse than all the rest exalted himself against his fellow-citizens") into the Temple, which was then robbed of all its sacred furniture and treasures. The walls of the city were pulled down, and many of the inhabitants were massacred. Menelaus, not satisfied with having rendered the Temple desolate (for the people would

The desecration of the Temple.

not and could not under his leadership worship there), induced Antiochus to issue a decree forbidding the Jews to follow their own customs and religion, and ordering them to adopt the Greek faith and mode of worshipping the various heathen gods, or die. Altars and idols were to be erected all over the country, and unclean animals sacrificed upon them. The observance of the Sabbath and the festivals was forbidden, the Temple desecrated, and the blood of swine sprinkled in the Holy of Holies. The scrolls of the Law were burnt, and, worst of all, a statue of the Greek god Jupiter was placed on the altar, and sacrifices were offered to it. In the words of an old writer, "Jerusalem became strange to her own children"; the Temple was "filled with riotings and revels"; and "the sanctuary was laid waste like a wilderness" (1 Macc. iv. 38–39).

CHAPTER II

169-167 B.C.

A GREAT STRUGGLE

A severe trial.

In order to bring about his desire "that all should be one people, and that everyone should obey his laws," Antiochus sent officers all over the country to see that his commands were obeyed. But Antiochus Epiphanes—"the God visible"—was also Antiochus Epimanes—"the Madman"—for none but a madman would have imagined that he could, merely by the issue of a decree, force the Jewish people to give up their faith and the faith of their fathers. The Temple might be desecrated; but they could, and would, still pray to the God whom they were used to worship there. A cruel, bigoted King of Syria might order them to give up their Sabbath, to eat unclean food, to bow before heathen idols. But *their* "orders" came from a higher Power. And so we find the ancestors of the Jews of to-day entering upon a struggle, the like of which has not been seen in the history of the world. Such men as Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander the Great previously, Julius Cæsar, Napoleon, and Nelson afterwards, fought bravely for their countries. Babylonians, Greeks, Romans, Englishmen, Americans, Frenchmen, and Germans have, in the course of the world's history, all contributed to the chapters of brave and heroic deeds which are treasured by us still, and form a golden book of the noble deeds of men. But the conflict which the Jews commenced in the year 168 B.C. was not for the purposes of conquest, or in order that their territory might be enlarged. It was in defence and on behalf of their religion. The temptations to worship the heathen idols were very great, for death was the penalty of disobedience to the King's commands. It was a severe trial, but truth and justice

always prevail in the end, and the persecuted people were victorious, as we shall now see.

Eleazar.

In Antioch an old scribe, who was ninety years of age, refused to eat swine's flesh, preferring to die. We can see him now, stripped of his clothes, but "wrapped in the dignity of old age and piety," walking boldly upright to the rack, on which he was beaten to death, as eagerly as a champion at the Grecian games, who challenged his opponents in proud defiance, was ready to prove his worth by his valour in the race. We can imagine him saying with a later martyr: "I cannot go into the presence of God with a lie in my right hand," for his last words were: "I will show myself such an one as mine age requireth, and leave a notable example to such as be young to die willingly and courageously for the honourable and holy laws." As the old historian said: "And thus this man died, leaving his death for an example of a noble courage, and a memorial of virtue, not only unto young men, but unto all his nation" (2 Macc. vi. 31).

Hannah and her seven sons.

But the most touching of all the terrible incidents which took place at this time was that of the widow Hannah and her seven sons. Legend has woven much romance around this heroic family. We are told that they had all been cast into prison, and were compelled to eat forbidden food. Then the King had them brought before him, and commanded them to pay homage to him and his gods.

The eldest son's answer.

"God forbid," exclaimed the eldest of the seven sons, "that I should bow before thy image. Our commandments say to us: 'I am the Lord thy God;' and I for one will worship none other." He was thereupon put to death, accompanied by terrible tortures, in the sight of his mother and brothers.

"Like a madman."

They then brought forward the second son, and made the same demand of him as of his brother. But he was made of similar mettle. "My brother bowed not," he said, "and neither will I." "Why not?" asked the King. "Because," replied the brave lad, "the second Commandment tells us, 'Thou shalt have no other God but Me.'" As he died he said to the King: "Thou like a madman takest us out of this present life, but the King of the world shall preserve us, who have died for His laws, unto everlasting life."

The third son was tortured like the others. The King threatened to tear out his tongue and cut off his hands if he were not obeyed. But the brave youth ignored these threats, and, putting out his tongue and holding forth his hands, courageously said: "These I had from God; and for the sake of His laws I am willing to lose them. My religion teaches, 'Thou shalt worship no other God,' and I welcome the fate suffered by my brothers rather than bow before thee or thy images." And so he died. *"Thou shalt worship no other God."*

The fourth boy quoted the command in Scripture not to sacrifice "unto any God save unto the Lord alone." "It is good," he said, "being put to death by men, to look for help from God to be raised up again by Him." And he, too, was killed. *The fourth son.*

"'Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God, the Lord is One,'" exclaimed the fifth son, as he also suffered the fate of his brothers. In reply to the command of the King to worship the heathen idols, he said: "Thou hast power over men, thou doest what thou wilt; yet think not that our nation is forsaken of God; but abide a while, and behold His great power." *"Hear, O Israel!"*

"Why art thou so obstinate?" was the question put by the King to the sixth of the young heroes. "Because Scripture assures me," was the reply, "'The Lord thy God is in the midst of thee, a mighty and terrible God,'" and he died for the proclamation of his faith. *"Why art thou so obstinate?"*

Then the seventh and youngest boy was brought before the cruel tyrant, who, angry that his commands had not been obeyed, and feeling that his dignity had been affected, tried another method with the lad. Speaking kindly to him, Antiochus said: "My son, come and bow before my gods." And the boy answered: "God forbid! Our holy religion teaches us, 'Know therefore this day, and lay it to thy heart, that the Lord He is God, in the heavens above and on the earth beneath; there is none else.'" *The seventh son.*

Still the King tried to coax him. "Thou art young," he said; "thou hast seen but little of the pleasures and joys of life. Do as I wish thee, and thy future shall be bright and happy. If thou wilt turn from the laws of thy fathers, I will take thee for a friend, and, when thou art old enough, trust thee with the affairs of my kingdom." *The King coaxes.*

But the reply came, with the same bold fearlessness as before: "The Lord shall reign for ever and ever. Thy nation and thy kingdom shall be destroyed; thou art here to day, to-morrow in the grave; to-day elevated, to-morrow lowly; but the most Holy One endures for ever."

Antiochus tries a trick.

And then the King tried to attain his end by a trick. "See," said Antiochus, "thy brothers lie slain before thee; their fate will be thine if thou refusest to do as I desire. But it pains me to do thee harm. I will cast my ring to the ground; stoop and pick it up; *that* I will consider allegiance to me and my gods." "Dost thou think that I fear thy threats?" replied the brave boy. "Why should I fear a human being more than the great God, the King of Kings?" "Where and what is thy God?" asked the King. "Can there be a world without a Creator?" replied the lad. "Of thy gods it is said, 'Mouths have they, but they speak not.' Of our God the Psalmist says, 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made.' Thy gods 'have eyes but they see not'; but the eyes of the Lord run to and fro in the whole earth! Thy gods 'have ears but they hear not'; but of our God it is written, 'The Lord hearkened and heard.'"

The heroic mother and her brave son.

Then Antiochus turned to the mother, and told her to advise her son to save his life. But Hannah, as the old historian puts it, "was marvellous above all, and worthy of honourable memory: for when she saw her seven sons slain within the space of one day, she bare it with a good courage, because of the hope that she had in the Lord." Addressing her boy she said: "I neither gave you breath nor life. Look upon the heaven and the earth, and all that is therein, and remember that God made them of things that were not; and so was mankind made likewise. Fear not this tormentor, but, being worthy of thy brethren, take thy death, that I may receive thee again in mercy with thy brethren." She did not, however, need to persuade her son to do what was right. For he replied: "I will not obey the King's commandment; but I will obey the commandment of the law that was given unto our fathers by Moses."

The King impatient.

The King then became impatient, and cried: "Let the lad be slain as were his brothers." But Hannah, throwing

her arms round the boy, besought Antiochus to kill her instead of her son. "No," he answered mockingly, "I cannot do it, for thine own laws forbid: 'Whether it be ox or sheep, ye shall not kill it and its young in one day.'" And so the seventh of Hannah's brave sons was killed. As he was led away, she cried to him: "My sacrifice hath exceeded that of Abraham. He built one altar whereon to sacrifice Isaac; thy mother hath built seven altars and

A tablet found in a Jewish cemetery at Rome in the 17th century, containing Greek, Latin, and Hebrew characters, and dating from about the first century. The Greek and Latin mean: "Here lies Tubias Barzaharona and his son Parecorius." The Hebrew word שָׁלוֹם (peace) can be seen four times.

sacrificed seven Isaacs in one day. He was but tempted; thy mother hath performed."

The first Jewish martyrs.

The old man Eleazar and the mother and her seven sons are the first of a long line of Jewish martyrs of whom history tells us. They head the list with the words of Eleazar (in answer to the Syrian King before whom he was arraigned) as a motto for them and for us: "What wouldst thou ask or learn? We are ready to die rather than transgress the laws of our fathers. It is manifest unto the Lord that hath the holy knowledge that, whereas I might have been delivered from death, I now endure grievous pains in body; but in soul I am well content to suffer these things, because I fear Him." These examples were followed by many others. Antiochus in vain commanded his officials to insist on the heathen sacrifices being offered. In vain he commanded the Jews to celebrate the festival of

the Greek god Bacchus, which consisted in the people decking themselves with ivy, drinking barrels of wine, and uttering wild shouts of joy. In many towns the officers found no one to meet them, for the people had sought refuge in the mountains or desert. The resistance offered only made Antiochus more angry, and he met it by cruelties of all kinds. Scrolls of the Law were burnt, Synagogues destroyed, and the people put to death.

Consolation in the struggle.

But, instead of breaking the spirit of the Jews, this action encouraged them still more in the defence of their religion. They were encouraged, too, by the writing of those of the Psalms (such as Psalms lxxiv., lxxix., &c.), which describe with sorrowing grief the desecration of the Temple, the gates in flames, the savage soldiers hewing down the delicate carved work with axe and hatchet, like woodmen in a forest; the roar of the mocking soldiers; the erection of heathen altars; the bodies of the massacred people left outside the walls of the city to be devoured by vulture and jackal. They looked in vain for a Prophet to arise, but they consoled themselves with the recollection of the overthrow of the great Kings of Babylon, Greece, and other nations, and with the hope that this crisis would pass in a similar manner. They received encouragement also from the appearance, at this period of great anxiety, of the Book of Daniel. At the time when the people knew that the ancient religion of Israel must either disappear altogether or rise stronger than before, the stories of bravery on behalf of their faith and trust in God (such as those of Daniel in the lions' den and the three men in the chamber of fire), which the Book of Daniel contains, must have provided a ready example to the people whom Antiochus King of Syria was now endeavouring to crush.

CHAPTER III

167–165 B.C.

JUDAS MACCABEUS

THERE lived at this time a priestly family known by the name of Hasmon ("the Magnate"). The head of the family was an old man named Mattathias, and he had five grown-up sons. Their names were Jochanan, "the Fortunate"; Simon, "the Jewel"; Judas, "the Hammerer"; Eleazar, "the Monster-Killer"; and Jonathan, "the Cunning." They all felt the sorrows of their people deeply. "Woe is me!" cried Mattathias to his sons. "Wherefore was I born to see this misery of my people, and of the Holy City, and to dwell there, when it was delivered into the hand of the enemy, and the Sanctuary into the hand of strangers? Her Temple is become as a man without honour. Her glorious vessels are carried away into captivity, her infants are slain in the streets, her young men with the sword of the enemy . . . and behold our Sanctuary, even our beauty and our glory, is laid waste, and the Gentiles have profaned it. To what end, therefore, shall we live any longer?" (1 Macc. ii. 7–13). *Mattathias and his five sons.*

They left Jerusalem, after the desecration of the Temple, and went to their family home, in the little town of Modin, sixteen miles north-west of Jerusalem. When the representative of King Antiochus appeared at Modin, and ordered the inhabitants to worship the heathen idols, Mattathias and his sons refused to obey the King's command. In answer to the Syrian official's order, Mattathias bravely said: "Though all the nations that are under the King's dominion obey him, and fall away every one from the religion of their fathers, and give consent to his commandments, yet will I and my sons and my brethren walk in the covenant of our fathers. God forbid that *In Modin.*

we should forsake the Law and the ordinances. We will not hearken to the King's words to go from our religion, either on the right hand or on the left" (1 Macc. ii. 19–22). When, notwithstanding this brave speech, one of the Jews in craven fear stepped forward to offer the heathen sacrifice, Mattathias could not restrain himself, and slew both the Jew and the royal officer.

Mattathias flees to the mountains.

The die was now cast, and with the words: "Whoever is zealous for the Law, and supporteth the Covenant, follow me," Mattathias led his sons and the inhabitants of the neighbourhood into the mountains of Ephraim near by. There they were obliged to herd like wild animals in the limestone caverns which gave them shelter. When their own clothing was worn out they protected themselves against the weather by skins such as were worn by the Syrian peasants, whilst for food they had to be content with the flesh of the mountain sheep or goats, and such roots and vegetables as they could find. Wherever they saw a heathen altar they destroyed it. They gradually gathered together small bands of their countrymen, and attacked the Syrian armies whenever the opportunity offered. Their spirit rose as they continued their "guerilla" warfare in the mountains. Some of the Chassidim had refused to fight on the Sabbath, and had all been killed. So Mattathias said to his followers: "If we all do as our brethren have done, and fight not for our lives and laws against the heathen, they will now quickly root us out of the earth. Whosoever shall come to make battle with us on the Sabbath day, we will fight against him; neither will we perish as our brethren that were murdered." Mattathias did not live long after this. He was buried at Modin, and the whole nation joined in mourning his loss. Before he passed away, he nominated the wise Simon to be the counsellor of the nation, and as for Judas, "let him," he said, "be your captain and fight the battle of the people."

Judas takes command.

So Judas "Maccabeus,"[1] as he has since been called, took command of the small band of brave Jews who were

[1] Judas was the Latin form of the Hebrew Judah (יְהוּדָה). Several explanations have been given for the term "Maccabee" by which Judas and his brothers have always been known. Some derive it from the Hebrew word מַקֶּבֶת—"the Hammer" (from which Judas was called מַקָּבִי, "the Hammerer"). Others think it comes from the

fighting Antiochus "the Madman." Matters at once took a favourable turn. Judas and his brothers took to heart the parting words of Mattathias to his sons: "Now therefore, my sons, be ye zealous for the Law, and give your lives for the covenant of your fathers. Call to remembrance what acts our fathers did in their time. So shall ye receive great honour and an everlasting name. . . . Wherefore, ye my sons, be valiant and show yourselves men in the behalf of the Law: for by it shall ye obtain glory" (1 Macc. ii. 50–1, 64). Who could fail to be encouraged by such eloquent and inspiring words?

Unselfishness of Judas's brothers.

We shall have occasion to praise Judas Maccabeus, but we may give a passing word of acknowledgment to his brothers, who were content, for the sake of their faith and their people, that Judas should take the leadership, although they were older than he. Throughout the whole course of the history of the Jewish people, one of the failings of the Jews—one from which they have suffered much—has been that so many have desired to be leaders. The cheerful willingness on the part of Judas's elder brothers—Jochanan and Simon—to sacrifice "self" for the good of their people and religion, affords an example which should not be lost sight of when we study the history of the time.

Three great victories.

Judas was a born leader, but in addition to his courage and generalship he possessed that enthusiasm for his faith without which he could have accomplished little. At first he only attacked small bands of the Syrian armies, but, as the number of his followers increased, he engaged the large armies of the enemy, always carefully choosing his ground among the hills of his native country, which he knew so well. Three great victories during the first two years of his campaign have made him famous for all time.

The battle of Emmaus, 165 B.C.

The third and most important battle took place at Emmaus, in the year 165 B.C. The Syrian King had resolved that, since he could not force the Israelites to

first letters of the words מִי כָמוֹךָ בָּאֵלִים יְהוָה, "Who is like unto Thee among the gods, O Lord?" which Judas is said to have inscribed on his banner as a war-cry; and others again derive from it the first letters of Mattathias's name, מַתִּתְיָהוּ כֹהֵן בֶּן יְהוֹחָנָן (Mattathias the Priest, son of Jehochanan).

obey his commands, he would wipe them out altogether. Antiochus himself was in Persia, but four of his most famous generals had charge of the army (now a very large one as compared with Judas's small band) which he had despatched to suppress the Jewish revolt. Judas had assembled his warriors near Emmaus, at Mizpah, which was a holy place, where the nation had gathered for combined public prayer as in the days of Samuel. There he delivered a stirring address to them. "Fear ye not their multitude," said he, "neither be ye afraid of their assault." The keynote of their prayer for victory had all along been Psalm cxv.: "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory." It must have been a mournful scene for the Maccabean soldiers as they stood and prayed on the rocky ridge of Mizpah.

A mournful scene.

For they could see the deserted streets, the closed gates of Jerusalem, and the Greek garrison in the holy Temple, and they could catch a glimpse of their mourning brethren, clad in tatters of black hair-cloth, with ashes on their heads. Judas and his followers spread out the scrolls of the Law, on which the Greeks had painted in mockery the pictures of heathen gods, and this reminded them of Antiochus's misdeeds and their own duty. The sight of the sacred scrolls stirred them to pour out their souls in their sorrow to God, and pray earnestly for a change in their fortunes. At the close of this sorrowful ceremony, Judas ordered those who were newly married, who had built a house or planted a new vineyard, or who lacked courage, to withdraw from the ranks. This he did on grounds of humanity, in accordance with the law laid down in Deuteronomy, and also in order that these men should not discourage their fellow-warriors by their excusable sadness. The army was then divided into four parts, under Judas himself and his brothers Simon, Jochanan, and Jonathan. Their watchword was to be their brother Eleazar's name: "God helps."

The decisive hour.

Judas marched one night past the rear of one of the Syrian armies, and unexpectedly attacked another body of the enemy. The camp fires were kept alight all night, and the sentries remained at their stations in order that the first Syrian general might think that Judas was still

in his camp, and thus not consider it necessary to assist his colleague. The plan succeeded—in great part owing to the courage of the sentries, who gave up their lives at the post of duty. The Maccabean soldiers fought with such enthusiasm and courage that they routed the enemy and set their camp on fire. As soon as the first army of Antiochus, which had been deceived so cleverly, saw the smoke rising from the tents of their comrades, they, too, fled.

A great victory.

It was a great victory, and the enemy were terror-stricken at the strategy and bravery of Judas's troops. The battle had taken place on a Friday afternoon. On the approach of the Sabbath Judas gave the command to halt from pursuing the flying enemy. They were now able to examine the booty, the capture of which was for them a fortunate result of the victory, for they had become so impoverished that they had neither clothes nor food, and they were even obliged to replace the golden candlestick of the Temple with iron sticks covered with zinc. As they spread out the gorgeous spoils of gold and silver, blue silk, and Tyrian purple, the Maccabean warriors sang the 136th Psalm—the "National Anthem," as it has been called, of the Jewish race. "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever" rang out, with fervent thanksgiving to God, from thousands of Jewish heroes' throats on this Sabbath of rejoicing.

CHAPTER IV

165–160 B.C.

THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE

Jerusalem re-entered by Judas.

JUDAS had yet another obstacle to overcome before he could hope to enter Jerusalem, for Lysias, the greatest of the Syrian generals, barred his way to the Holy City. A battle took place near the capital, at Beth-Tsur—"the House of the Rock"—where Lysias was put to flight, although his army greatly outnumbered the small band of Judas. The victorious sons of Mattathias with their heroic followers were now able to re-enter the Holy City. But they found it desolate. The gates of the Temple were burnt, heathen altars had been set up in the holy Sanctuary, and weeds had been allowed to grow in the forecourts. They immediately set to work, however, to cleanse the building. All the heathen altars and vessels were removed, and new articles (though at first of meaner appearance owing to the impoverished state of the people) were furnished to replace them.

The Feast of Chanukah.

At last everything was complete, and with songs of thanksgiving to God and cries of joy the Temple was consecrated and dedicated anew on the 25th day of the month of Kislev, in the year 164 B.C., the very day on which, three years previously, heathen sacrifices had been offered to the Greek god. People from all over the country took part in the ceremony, which lasted for eight days. The perpetual light burned once more. The ancient sacrifices were offered, and the smoke went up again from the altar. Judas and the Great Council decided that henceforth the Jews should keep the eight days from the 25th of Kislev as a festival of rejoicing to commemorate the victory of the small body of faithful, courageous Israelites over the Syrian army: the triumph of the worship

of the God of Israel over Greek idolatry. For over two thousand years the Jewish people have, accordingly, observed the "Feast of Dedication" (Chanukah), and lamps have been lit in the Synagogues and homes of the Jews as a reminder of the perpetual lamp that was kindled when the Temple was re-dedicated to the service of God.

Continuation of the campaign.

The task that Judas had set himself was, however, by no means over. The Temple had to be protected from possible interference from Menelaus and his Greek followers; the Akra (or citadel of Jerusalem) was still in the hands of the soldiers of Antiochus; and the city of Jerusalem was also subject to attack from the Syrian general Lysias, who had re-assembled his soldiers at Beth-Tsur. The neighbouring nations, too, were jealous of the victories which had been won by the Jews, and were afraid lest they might become too powerful and oppress them. The Idumeans in the south, in particular, showed hostility to Judas. He was obliged, therefore, to proceed against all these opponents, and in each case he succeeded in defeating their armies. This he did without the loss of a single Jewish soldier. On one occasion a Judean fortress was being besieged by one of Judas's opponents. The scaling-ladders had been placed against the walls and the battering-rams put into position, when there broke through the stillness of the early morning the well-known trumpet-blast of "the Hammerer," and the opposing general, recognising that Judas was near at hand, gave up the siege and fled.

Death of Antiochus.

Meanwhile Antiochus IV., King of Syria, had died—"unwept, unhonoured, and unsung." He was succeeded by his young son, Antiochus V., while Lysias still had command of the Syrian army. Another battle now took place at Beth-Tsur.

Battle of the Elephants.

The Syrians had brought a large number of elephants with them. It was the practice to make the animals excited in war by showing them the red juice of grapes and mulberries. On their backs were huge wooden towers, fastened by vast trappings. The soldiers in charge of them were dressed in chain armour, with bright brass helmets and brass or gold shields. On the neck of each animal sat the black Indian driver, whilst two or three soldiers walked on either side. The tramp of the huge beasts and the

rattling of the armour and fittings made a terrific noise as they advanced together, and their irresistible weight and number for once secured the defeat of Judas.

Death of Eleazar.

Eleazar, the fourth of the noble band of brothers, sacrificed his life in the course of the battle in a daring act of heroism. Thinking that the gorgeously attired rider of one of the elephants was the young King himself, he leaped underneath the animal's body, and, with one thrust of his spear, brought down the great beast upon him. He died, and his heroic act fully justified his name, the "Monster-Killer."

Peace.

Judas now returned to Jerusalem, where he was attacked by Lysias. Fortunately, however, a Persian army was marching on Antioch, and Lysias was obliged to retire from Jerusalem. The Syrian general had become impressed by the resourcefulness and ability of Judas, and the consequent difficulty of overcoming him, and he persuaded the young King of Syria to seize the opportunity to make peace with the brave hero. A treaty was accordingly agreed upon, by which the Jews were to have complete religious freedom. Thus the wars of Judas had been crowned with success. Peace reigned in the land, the people resumed their occupations, and Judas Maccabeus was appointed High Priest.

The battle of Beth-horon.

But the peace was not to last long. Some of the Greek party in Jerusalem made complaint to the Syrian King about Judas, and an army was once more sent to confront the Maccabean hero. A battle took place in the year 161 B.C. at Beth-horon, where Judas had gained his first victory. The Syrians had an immense army, whilst Judas had but 3000 men. The Syrians were, however, defeated, and their general perished on the battlefield.

Death of Judas, 160 B.C.

This victory was soon followed by Judas's last battle. Surrounded by a mere handful of his followers, it was quite impossible for him on this occasion to withstand the mighty Syrian host assembled against him. But he fought valiantly to the end. Some of his comrades advised him to surrender, but, although he saw the odds against which he had to fight, he cried boldly: "God forbid that I should do this thing, and flee away from them. If our time be come, let us die manfully for our brethren, and let us not leave a stain upon our honour and memory." And so, like

the brave soldier he was, sword in hand, he died. His body was afterwards rescued by two of his brothers.

The lesson of his life.

No name in Jewish history will be remembered with more enthusiasm than that of Judas Maccabeus. When we learn in England about Cromwell and Nelson and Wellington and the other names that have made England great; or when, in America, we read of the heroes of the "War of Independence," we can and we should always think of the brave man in the days of old who equals the greatest of them. With a mere handful of followers Judas Maccabeus fought and defeated the vast Syrian armies, and thus preserved Israel's religion for all time. His life and his death are recorded on the roll of the heroes of mankind as a memorial for all ages and all peoples.

Judas's memory-song.

One of the greatest of modern musicians—Handel—chose as the framework of one of his oratorios the deeds of Judas. "See the conquering hero comes," which might have been the greeting given to him on his entry into Jerusalem after defeating the Syrian armies, has been the musical welcome offered to British warriors for a hundred and fifty years. When we think what might have happened if Judas had not been victorious, we can see how important a part he played in Jewish history, and, indeed, in the history of the world. For, if the Syrian King had gained the day, Judaism would have died; Christianity would not have come into existence; the whole history of modern nations would have been changed.

CHAPTER V

160–63 B.C.

JUDEA AN INDEPENDENT STATE

The people roused.

At first sight it may appear that the exploits of Judas had not improved the condition of the Jews very much. But this was by no means the case. The spirit of the people had been roused; the Greeks and Syrians no longer looked upon the Jews with contempt, and the latter could henceforth practise their religion without interference.

Three sections of the people.

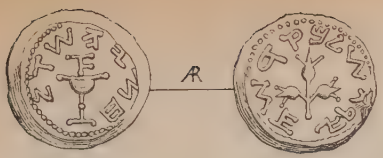
Three sections of the people now began to show themselves. There were the Chassidim, the very strict people, who, it will be remembered, at first refused to fight for Judas Maccabeus on the Sabbath. Then there were still a large number of people who followed the Greek customs, and were not very observant of the Law. Lastly, there were the followers of the Maccabean brothers, who were not satisfied with having obtained religious freedom, but wished their country to be independent of Syria altogether. For some time after Judas's death things did not go happily, and Jochanan, one of the four brothers of Judas, died in the course of the warfare with the Syrians that now took place.

Jonathan leader and High Priest.

But Jonathan and Simon, the two remaining brothers, prepared for war in the years of peace which followed Jochanan's death. A revolution occurred in Syria, and Jonathan, being able to render assistance to the new King of that country, was granted favours by him, and was appointed High Priest. He seized the opportunity to fortify Jerusalem, and, under his able leadership, Judea became independent once more. But none of the five brothers was allowed to die a natural death. A Syrian general enticed Jochanan to meet him for peaceful deliberations, and then foully murdered him. So he also, like his brothers, shed his blood for his people's cause.

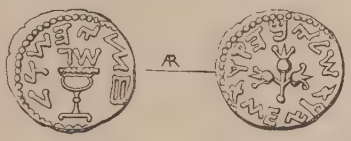
Simon the Prince.

Jonathan was succeeded by the last remaining of the noble five sons of Mattathias—Simon. Although a very old man,



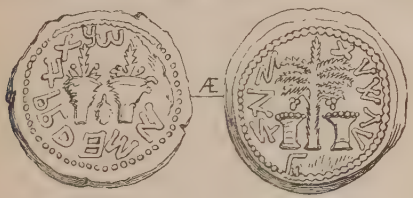
Obverse *Reverse*

Obverse :—Containing the Hebrew words meaning "Half shekel"; a cup with a pellet on either side; and the Hebrew letter Aleph = 1 (*i.e.* the first year of Simon's coinage). *Reverse* :—The Hebrew words meaning "Jerusalem the Holy," with a central device, thought to be Aaron's rod.



Obverse *Reverse*

Obverse :—Hebrew words meaning "Half shekel," and a cup ornamented with jewels, above which are Hebrew letters meaning third year. *Reverse* :—Hebrew words meaning "Jerusalem the Holy."



Obverse *Reverse*

Obverse :—Hebrew words meaning "In the 4th year—one half"; two bunches of thickly-leaved branches (*Lulab*), between which is a citron (*Ethrog*). *Reverse*:—Hebrew words meaning "The redemption of Zion"; a palm-tree between two baskets filled with dates and other fruits.

Obverse *Reverse*

Obverse :—Hebrew words meaning "The redemption of Zion," and a cup, ornamented with jewels, partially covered with the countermark of an elephant. *Reverse* :—Hebrew words meaning "In the fourth year," partially obliterated.

SOME COINS ISSUED BY SIMON MACCABEUS, 142–135 B.C.

he was full of enthusiasm for his people and his faith. When he explained to the people assembled in the outer court of the Temple, "I am no better than my brothers, who died for what they held most sacred," the Jews replied with one voice, "Be our leader, like Judas and Jonathan your brothers." Judas had performed brave deeds of valour, but Jonathan had raised the Judean republic from the lowest depths to a high position of independence. Simon, who had been described by Mattathias as "the Father of them all," continued Jonathan's work.

A time of peace.

A time of peace now ensued, when "every man sat under his vine and his fig tree." Simon captured the three remaining Syrian fortresses, and suppressed the practice of the Greek customs. He built a harbour and issued coins bearing his name. He entered, too, into a treaty with the Roman Empire, and delegates were despatched to Rome with a heavy golden shield and a golden chain as a present to the Senate. The Romans were eager to enter into relations with the Jews because they recognised their strong national spirit, and therefore thought that they would be useful allies against the common Syrian foe. It was, indeed, part of Roman policy to protect the weak peoples against the powerful empires, and thus help to overcome the latter. Simon, like his brother Jonathan, fell by the hand of treachery. He was enticed to the house of his own son-in-law, and was there cruelly murdered with two of his sons.

John Hyrcanus, 135 104 B.C.

Simon was succeeded by his eldest son, John Hyrcanus. John had previously been appointed by his father leader of the Jewish forces, with the words: "I and my brethren and my fathers have ever from our youth unto this day fought against the enemies of Israel, and things have prospered so well in our hands that we have delivered Israel oftentimes. But now I am old, and thou, by God's mercy, art of a sufficient age. Be thou instead of me and my brother, and go and fight for our nation, and the help of Heaven be with thee." John Hyrcanus worthily followed in his father's footsteps, and during his reign the boundaries of the kingdom were enlarged. He also, like his father, entered into a treaty with Rome, which was now spreading her power over the East. From this time there was a colony of Jews at Rome, and henceforth the Jewish people were surrounded, like Antiochus Epiphanes on the sea-shore in

Egypt, by a circle of Roman power from which they were unable to escape.

Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes.[1]

It was during the reign of John Hyrcanus that the differences between the three divisions of the people, to which we referred at the commencement of this chapter, came into prominence. Some of the Chassidim—the pious ones of the time of Judas Maccabeus—had begun to separate themselves from the rest of the people. They lived a lonely life in common, away from their fellow-men; they spent most of their time in prayer and study, and were called Essenes. The Sadducees were the aristocrats of the time, and belonged to the families of the High Priests and generals and princes. They would not accept a great part of the explanations of the Bible and traditions which had been handed down through the ages, and they did not believe in a future life. The Pharisees, on the other hand, formed the majority of the people, and were more democratic and more national than the Sadducees. They observed all the customs which had grown up round the Law in the course of time, and, unlike the Sadducees, desired that Judea should become and remain an independent State.

John Hyrcanus and the Pharisees.

John Hyrcanus was at first in sympathy with the Pharisees. But he did not wish to quarrel with the Sadducees, amongst whom were his generals and statesmen. He therefore strove to be at peace with both parties. Towards the end of his life, however, he went over to the Sadducees. This was brought about in the following way. Hyrcanus was once present at a banquet, which was held to celebrate a victory over the Syrians. On the table were golden dishes laden with luxurious fruit, and also roots and herbs, which were to remind the guests of the hardships their fathers had gone through. Whilst the feast was in progress, Hyrcanus asked his guests if there were anything in his conduct to which a Pharisee might object. He evidently wished to find out what were their feelings towards him. In reply a Pharisee said: "Hyrcanus should content himself with the crown of royalty, and should place on a worthier head the High Priest's diadem. During an attack on Modin by the Syrians his mother was taken prisoner, and it is not fitting for the son of a prisoner to be a priest—

[1] A full account of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes is given in ch. xii.

how much less a High Priest!" Jonathan, the leader of the Sadducees, seized this opportunity to attack the Pharisees, and from that time the quarrel between the two parties never ceased till Jerusalem passed out of the hands of the Israelites.

Quarrels between Pharisees and Sadducees.

The dispute, therefore, had serious consequences in the history of the Jewish people. Indeed, we can safely assert that, if it had not been for quarrels like this amongst the Jews themselves, they might still be in a land of their own. The story about the King's mother proved to be false, and Hyrcanus showed his anger by deposing the Pharisees who held high positions, and placing Sadducees in their stead. This, of course, only increased their quarrels. Henceforth the sympathies of the people (who were principally Pharisees) were never with the Kings of Judea. The office of High Priest also, held, as it was, either by the King or one of the Sadducees, was no longer respected as of old.

The first Jewish Queen.

John Hyrcanus was succeeded in turn by two of his sons. The widow of the second—Salome Alexandra—was the first Jewish Queen. She was a wise woman, for she contrived to be on good terms with the Pharisees and Sadducees. Whilst she was ruler of Judea all was well, and the land was at peace. When she died, however, civil war broke out again.

A noble prayer.

One of the two sons of John Hyrcanus, a weak young man, became King. He and his brother fought one another, and the whole nation now became divided in consequence into two parties. During the warfare Jerusalem was besieged, and we are told of a noble prayer which the High Priest, who had been asked to bless the arms of the besiegers, uttered at the time: "O God, Ruler of all men, since these standing with me are Thy people, and the besieged are Thy priests, I pray that Thou wilt hearken neither to those against these, nor bring into effect what these beseech against those." Though this fine man was stoned to death, his prayer was answered—by the approach of the common enemy, Rome.

Pompey.

Pompey, the great Roman general, seized upon the quarrel between Alexandra's two sons as a favourable opportunity to interfere, and he made Judea part of the Roman Empire. He entered Jerusalem in the year 62 B.C., and appointed Antipater, an Idumean, governor of the kingdom.

Antipater the Idumean.

The Idumeans were the descendants of Esau; they had been conquered by the Jews some years previously, and had been half converted to Judaism. They remained, however, a cruel and somewhat savage people. They lived in the mountains in the south of Judea, and led a somewhat wild kind of life. John Hyrcanus had entered into an alliance with them, and Antipater, taking advantage of this fact,

Obverse *Reverse*

A COIN OF ANTIGONUS, GRANDSON OF JOHN HYRCANUS

Obverse:—Greek words meaning "King Antigonus," round a wreath. *Reverse*:—Hebrew words meaning "Mattathias" (the name adopted by Antigonus) "the High Priest and the Senate of the Jews."

was able to influence the young, weak King, and obtain the real power for himself. In order to achieve his ends, he allied himself with the rulers of Rome. When Julius Cæsar and Pompey, the great generals, and Crassus, the wealthy noble, joined forces and divided between themselves the power of the Roman Senate, Antipater became Cæsar's ally, and continued to act as governor of the kingdom. Antipater and his son who succeeded him were thus, like William the Conqueror of England, usurpers of the throne, and the people were therefore always opposed to them.

CHAPTER VI

63–4 B.C.

HEROD THE GREAT

Herod's early days.

It is Antipater's son Herod, however, who takes the more prominent part in our history. When he was only twenty-five years of age, he was introduced by his father into public life, and already as a child he was called "the future King of the Jews." Like a true descendant of Esau, he was "a man of the field, a mighty hunter." He became famous as a horseman, a thrower of the lance, and a hunter, and he had, too, a fine presence, for we are told that he was tall, with flowing black hair. His father made him governor of Galilee, and it was in this province (which has been called the "Highlands" of Palestine), with its hills and lakes and glens, that those who had opposed Antipater had taken refuge, just as the narrow ravines and the rugged mountain-side of the Highlands of Scotland have provided a place of retreat for other warriors.

Suppressing revolts.

Herod suppressed the revolts with a firm hand, but with much cruelty. Instead of permitting the rebels to appear before the Court for trial, as required by the Jewish law even for the worst offender, Herod executed a number of them himself. News of his stern measures reached Jerusalem, and the complaints became so numerous that he was summoned to appear before the Sanhedrin, the great Council and Court of Justice of the time.

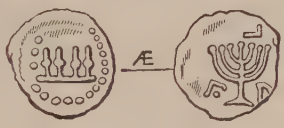
Herod's trial.

Instead of appearing humbly dressed in black, as was the custom for an accused person, Herod came before the judges dressed in a magnificent royal robe, "in purple, with his hair finely trimmed," and surrounded by an escort of soldiers. He did not condescend to offer any excuse for his conduct, but presented letters from the Roman governor of Syria. The Sanhedrin were overawed by the presence of the

soldiers, and they hesitated to condemn Herod. The chiefs of the Council at the time were Shemaiah and Abtalion. The latter advised his colleagues to adjourn the hearing. But Shemaiah protested against giving way. "Know then," he said, "that he, before whom ye are all trembling, will one day deliver you all to the sword of the executioner." And so it afterwards happened. Shemaiah's warning was not heeded; the Sanhedrin adjourned, and Herod escaped punishment.

Herod made King, 37 B.C.

Important events were now happening in the history of the world. Julius Cæsar conquered Gaul and Britain, made himself sole master of the Roman world, and was soon afterwards murdered. Antipater, Herod's father, was poisoned. After having quelled a rebellion and secured safety for his country, Herod married Mariamne, a member of the Maccabean family, who was celebrated for her beauty. Mark Antony, who succeeded Cæsar in power at Rome, received Herod with much favour, appointed him governor of Judea, restored to him coastlands and towns of Judea that had been previously given away by the Romans, and afterwards declared him to be King (37 B.C.). Herod was not able, however, to secure this position without a great deal of difficulty, and had to call in the help of the Roman soldiers. Five cities that opposed him and his Roman allies were burnt, and the whole of Judea was now forced to pay tribute to Rome. Jerusalem was captured, a large number of its inhabitants were killed, and the Roman soldiers were only prevented from destroying the Temple by a present from Herod.



A COIN ISSUED ABOUT 30 B.C.

Obverse :—Four trees planted parallel, or bunches of flowers and fruit. *Reverse* :—The seven-branched candlestick.

His character.

Herod—"the Great," as he was called by his followers—reigned for thirty-four years. There have been few rulers in all history whose hands were more stained with cruel deeds. Indeed, he was "great" in all but goodness. He not only killed the inhabitants of cities which opposed his will, but he also cruelly put to death members of his own family. His brother-in-law he enticed to his country estate, induced him to bathe in a lake, where, after dark,

he had him murdered, and then announced that he had been drowned. This brother-in-law (the brother of Mariamne) was the sole male descendant of the Maccabean Kings. He was, therefore, the lawful heir to the throne, upon which Herod, the son of Antipater, his royal father's minister, now sat as King by Rome's will, secured by adroit flattery, submission to Rome's interest, and high-handed force. His wife and sons Herod had killed from suspicion of intrigues against himself. Sometimes he would give way to deep grief after he had committed these cruel deeds, and apparently regret that he had done anything wrong. When he had had murdered his noble wife Mariamne, in a fit of remorse, thinking that he could in this way repair his wicked deed, he erected a tower in her honour.

"Mine's the guilt, and mine the hell."

The poet Byron makes Herod say:

"Oh! Mariamne! now for thee
The heart for which though bled'st is bleeding,
Revenge is lost in agony,
And wild remorse to rage succeeding.

. . . . . .

"And mine's the guilt, and mine the hell,
This bosom's desolation dooming;
And I have earn'd those tortures well,
Which, unconsumed, are still consuming!"

Soon after he came to the throne of Judea, Herod caused all the members of the Sanhedrin who had tried him, with three exceptions, to be put to death. Thus Shemaiah's prediction was fulfilled.

The cruellest deed of all.

But the cruellest deed of all was the execution of his two young sons (Alexander and Aristobulus), which sent a shudder through the land. His revolting behaviour to his own relations caused it to be said that it was preferable to be "Herod's swine" than "Herod's son." Nevertheless, Herod sometimes became filled with the desire to serve his people. He rebuilt the Temple, and erected all kinds of fine buildings in the capital and other cities. During a year of famine he had the gold and silver in his palace melted down in order to buy corn in Egypt. He appointed bakers for those who could not bake the flour which fell to their share, and helped the sufferers in many other

ways. His introduction of the Roman amphitheatre and the Greek theatre, and his burdensome taxation, however, only embittered the people against his rule, notwithstanding the fact that he encouraged trade and secured peace in the land. Herod's character may be contrasted with that of Hillel—the famous, gentle, peace-loving Rabbi, who lived at this time. "Do not unto others what thou wouldst not have done to thee" was Hillel's "golden rule," and we cannot help feeling that, if this had been adopted by Herod, the whole history of the time might have been different.

Why Herod rebuilt the Temple.

The following story is told of the manner in which Herod came to rebuild the Temple. Among the many scholars that he tortured was one whose name was Baba ben Buta. Baba was descended from one of the noblest Jewish families, and was greatly esteemed. Herod permitted him to live, but caused his eyes to be put out. The tyrant King took great delight in disguising himself as one of the common people, and, by mingling with them, discovering what they thought of him. Once he came to Baba ben Buta, sat down beside him, and said: "What do you think of the accursed slave who has forced himself on the throne? He murdered his masters. He has put to death the great scholars. He put your eyes out. Do you think he wishes to destroy all the Jews?" "What shall I do to him?" replied the Rabbi. "Curse him," said the disguised King, "and your words shall fall heavily upon him." "No, sir," said Baba, "our Bible forbids us to curse a King." "But," said Herod, "he is no King; he is a slave." "Even though he be not a King," was the reply, "he is a prince, and we must not curse princes." "Ah!" replied the King, "but that is true only when he observes the Jewish laws. Herod tramples them under foot, and holds them in contempt." "But I fear," said Baba, "that he may discover that I have cursed him." "Who will tell him?" answered Herod. "There is no one here." "It is written," said Baba, "that 'little birds carry tales.'"

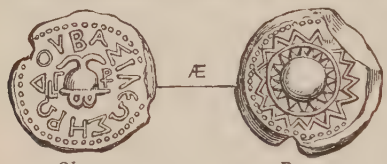
Too late!

Herod could no longer restrain himself. Having told Baba who he was, he said: "If I had known that you learned men were so careful and so good, I would never have done you any wrong. Advise me how I can make good the wrong that I have committed." "You have

extinguished the light of Judaism," replied the Rabbi, "by slaying the great scholars who protect the 'light.' Go, make the light to shine again. Rebuild the Temple, for that, too, is light." Herod obeyed the old man's injunction, and rebuilt, as we have seen, the magnificent building which henceforth bore his name.

Herod's last decree.

Herod's last act was typical of his whole life. He lay on his deathbed, suffering from a painful disease. As he hovered between life and death, he gave orders for the most respected men all over the country to be brought to the city of Jericho, and imprisoned till his death. They were then all to be massacred, so that the entire nation might be mourning at his loss. The decree was, however, not carried out by his successor.



Obverse *Reverse*

A COIN OF HEROD'S TIME

Obverse: — Greek words meaning "King Herod," and a helmet with cheek pieces.
Reverse: — The Macedonian shield, on which there is a disc surrounded by rays.

His reign memorable for evil.

Herod was in many ways an able man. He was a skilful general, and his courage under disaster and his ability to rally his soldiers to victory when they were all but beaten won the admiration of his people. Herod was a great "builder"; the walls of Jerusalem, the magnificent city of Cæsarea, the rebuilt Temple, all bore witness to his zeal in this respect. But the introduction of Grecian games, and the vain show and pomp of his court, showed that he was out of sympathy with his people, and that he did not govern for their good, but for his own gratification. He was a "strong" man, ruling his country with firmness and keeping it in order, and he gained the confidence of the Romans on this account. Although he was not a Jew by birth, no King of the Jews since Solomon made such an impression on the people and their country. But we should require of a ruler something more than personal courage and ability, and Herod's hideous cruelty has made his reign of evil memory for all time.

CHAPTER VII[1]

A DAY IN JERUSALEM

Early Morn

The awakening.

Let us retrace our steps, and imagine we are spending a summer's day in Jerusalem, while Herod the Great is yet alive. As the stars begin to fade in the early dawn of a June morning, the Levite Temple guards make their round by torchlight in two parties, and, meeting in the chamber where presently the High Priest's meat-offering is to be baked, report to their chief that all is well. The priests not on duty the previous night rise, bathe, put on their robes of office, and wash their hands and feet from the bronze basin which had been lowered the night before into an underground reservoir. Lots are drawn to decide who shall undertake the various duties of the day. Then the priests blow their trumpets, and the blast resounds far away, summoning the people of the town below to morning prayer.

Early duties in the Temple.

At the command of the captain of the Temple guard, the Levites open all the gates of the Temple. They pull out a marble slab in the wall of one of the chambers used by the priests, and take from behind it the keys of the Temple gates, which were attached by a golden chain. Preparations for morning service, centering in the sacrifice of a lamb, are begun. We see the altar of the burnt-offering being prepared. The ashes from yesterday's sacrifice are removed, and the piles of wood placed upon glowing coals take fire. Then the musicians fetch their instruments, and the sacred utensils, which are used for the sacrifices and other portions of the Temple service, are arranged by the Levites on a

[1] The author has adapted, in this and succeeding chapters, portions of Franz Delitzsch's *Jüdisches Handwerkerleben zur Zeit Jesu*, to which charming book he here makes his sincere acknowledgments.

silver table. After this the guard is changed, and the priests and Levites who officiated yesterday are relieved. The Ten Commandments are then recited, and the priests bless the people and say the *Shema* (the declaration of the unity of God) with a prayer before it and after it.

"The dawn has reached Hebron."

All this is done by torchlight. Meanwhile, the officer of the guard is watching for the approach of day. He sends some of his priests to the roof of the Temple, and when the sky is so bright that they can see the city of Hebron among the mountains to the south-east of Jerusalem, they call out: "The dawn has reached Hebron." At once the cry goes forth, "Priests come to your service; Levites to your post; Israel to your places!" (The last-named were the people who, being neither Levites nor priests, took it in turns to pass the night on watch in the Temple and represented the Jewish nation at the sacrifices.) Then a bell is rung in the great outer court of the Temple as a signal to the people there assembled to commence their prayers.

The town astir.

Meanwhile, the town begins to stir, as the booths are opened under the cedar trees on the Mount of Olives. Close to the Temple we can see the cattle and poultry dealers and the money-changers hurrying to the Temple market. This is held outside the Temple walls, and later on we shall be able to see oxen and sheep being sold to the wealthier, doves and pigeons to the poorer worshippers, for use as sacrifices. The money-changers exchange Greek and other money for Jewish coins; they have had their places in the market for many generations, for the yearly Temple tax and the monetary offerings were given in the national coins, which those who came from outside Jerusalem did not always possess. Here and there on the crowded bridge leading to the Temple a passer-by stops to look to the left at the splendid theatre, or leans over the parapet to the right to get a waft of fresh air that rises from the meadows in the "Vale of Cheese-mongers" below.

Going to Synagogue.

Not every one, however, attends the morning service in the Temple, although nearly all who can do so attend worship of some kind, for "he who has the means of attending Synagogue, and does not do so, is accounted a bad neighbour." "Prayer is Israel's only weapon," say the Rabbis, "a weapon inherited from our fathers, a

weapon tried in a thousand battles." But "even when the gates of prayer are shut in Heaven, those of tears are open." Some go to the various Synagogues, of which there are many in Jerusalem. For instance, the two fine gentlemen yonder dressed in quite the Greek style, who are talking Greek to each other, go to the Synagogue of the Alexandrians. The citizens engaged in the various trades have their own places of worship. Thus, that respectable-looking citizen, who is carrying his tephillin under his arm, attends the Synagogue of the Coppersmiths (where, by-the-bye, he pays for his seat). "Cursed is the man," cries the pious coppersmith, as he espies the Greek-looking young men, "who rears swine, and cursed also is the man who instructs his son in Greek wisdom!" One of the young men overhears the remark, and inquires the reason for this outburst on the part of the coppersmith. He replies by quoting the words of the Bible (Joshua i. 8.): "This book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein *day and night*." "Go," he continues, "and find out the time when it is neither day nor night, and *then* study the wisdom of the Greeks."

A Rabbi shoemaker.

The old man yonder with a chair on his head is a Rabbi, who is going to the schoolhouse. He puts into practice the saying: "Great is labour, for it honours the Lord," and will not allow any one to carry the chair for him. (The Rabbis follow all kinds of occupations: they are tailors, bakers, perfumers, doctors, astronomers, architects, surgeons, surveyors, clerks, money-changers, gravediggers, fishermen, pudding-makers, woodcutters, curriers, stove-builders, sandal-makers, smiths, embroiderers, potters, fullers, carpenters, thread-makers, blacksmiths, charcoal-burners, bricklayers, and pin-makers.) The old man is a shoemaker by trade, to which he devotes a third of his time (apart, of course, from meals and sleep). Another third he spends in study, and the remainder of his time in prayer. Like all the other wise men, who work as well as study, he follows the advice given by one of the sages to his pupils: "Do any kind of work, even to the skinning of carcases on the highways, and say not as an excuse, 'I am a learned man, and too respectable.'" He is accompanied by two other learned men, who have followed the injunction to prepare for prayer by putting

on new and clean clothes; for the one has donned a handsome pair of red gaiters, and the other has thrown a new mantle over his shoulders. They pay great attention to the old man, for they remember the proverb: "When the King dies, cry, 'Long live the King!' (for he leaves a successor). But when the wise man dies, it is not always an easy matter to replace him."

Not going to Synagogue.

The travel-stained merchant who passes us is not going to Synagogue, for he is taking advantage of the permission given to travellers to abstain from prayer for three days after a journey. On the other side of the street is a lady who has just had her hair trimmed by the hairdresser, and has a bunch of roses in her rich dress. She wishes to show her friends her new dress. She does not, therefore, propose to go to Synagogue, where she would have to hide herself behind the lattice of the women's gallery, but to the "Forecourt of the Women," in the Temple, where she has ample opportunity of being seen and admired.

Anxious worshippers.

The worshippers separate in all directions. Most of them seem anxious, and, while they talk or walk together, look nervously about them, for they do not know what new act of oppression they have to fear from King Herod. A dignified old man, with a long beard and two white locks in front, murmurs to himself, as he passes the square in front of the theatre: "I thank Thee, my God, and the God of my fathers, that Thou hast set my lot amongst those who abide in the Synagogues and Schools, and not amongst those who frequent the theatre and the circus." His wife, who walks just behind him, says, under her breath, "Amen," and looking across to the Tower of Queen Mariamne, with tears in her eyes, she whispers, "Thou hast passed beyond all this; well for thee that thou livest no longer, noble Mariamne!"

Prayer on all sides.

Meanwhile the sun has risen, and the time of morning prayer (*Shacharith*), when the sacrifice is performed in the Temple, has come. Yonder shopkeeper, who has been late in starting for the Temple, suddenly stops as the time for prayer arrives, and binds his broad tephillin on his arm and forehead. A labourer, basket in hand, up in the fruit tree, stops his picking, and prays in his temple of boughs. Another workman places his pickaxe

down on the heap of stones where he has been working, and recites the *Shema*. Prayer is heard on all sides. Only in Herod's palace does silence reign. The tyrant is still asleep, and his servants walk on tiptoe. The Hebrew nation prays, and every Jew, wherever he be, adds in thought to the prayer he utters an appeal for deliverance from tyranny. In thought, too, he prays for the two noble sons of the House of the Maccabees, Alexander and Aristobulus. He remembers also the high-minded princess Mariamne, who was murdered by her husband—that same Herod, who now keeps his sons in a dungeon, where they hover between life and death.

A visit to a Synagogue.

Let us pay a brief visit to one of the Synagogues. It is situate on top of a hill, and is a simple, square building. Inside, the ark containing the scrolls of the Law attracts our attention, as does the reading-desk which is built on a raised platform in the centre of the building. The front benches are used by old men, the younger men filling those farther back. In imitation of the perpetual light in the Temple, a lamp is always kept burning. We listen with much interest to the service—the *Shema;* the *Amidah;* the Psalms; the reading of a passage from the Pentateuch out of the scroll, translated verse by verse by the interpreter; the recital of a portion from the Prophets; and finally the benediction. The passage from the Prophets provides the Rabbi or Scribe of the congregation with a text for an address. The Rabbi is urging the people to give up their evil ways without delay, and he gives them a parable to illustrate his teaching: "A certain king invited his servants to a feast. The wiser guests knew that the King could have a meal prepared in a very short time, and so they immediately put on their best clothes, and waited at the door of the palace. But the others thought that there was plenty of time, and they did not hurry to get themselves ready. Suddenly they were all summoned to the feast, and, as can be imagined, the King was more pleased with those who were properly dressed than with the others. The wise guests ate and drank and enjoyed themselves, while the careless ones, who came in unbecoming clothes, had to stand aside and look on." "Be prepared, therefore," the Rabbi says, "for thou dost not know what the morrow may bring forth." "Do God's

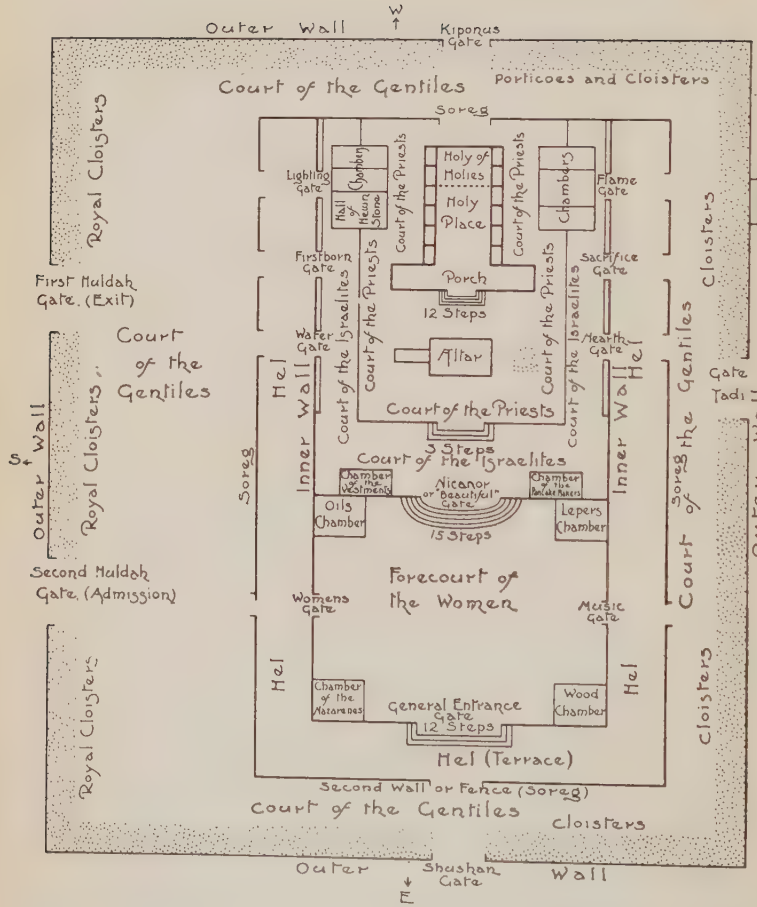
will," he concludes, "as if it were thy will, that He may do thy will as if it were His will."

The best preacher.

One man in the Synagogue continues his prayers after the other worshippers have finished. He forgot, we learn, to say his prayers the previous evening, and he is taking advantage of the permission to say his evening and morning prayers together, for "the evening and the morning were one day." As the congregation leave the Synagogue, they are loud in their praises of the Rabbi, but one man is heard to say: "I know a better preacher than our Rabbi." "Who is that?" asks another. "The best preacher," he says, "is the heart, the best teacher is time, the best book is the world, and the best friend is God." The Rabbi is not, however, the only Synagogue official who is discussed by the gossiping crowd. There is the "Ruler of the Synagogue," who is chosen from among the elders, and whose duty it is to look after the structure of the Synagogue, to superintend the conduct of the appointed services, to preserve order, and to see that nothing occurs which is inconsistent with traditional ideas of reverence and the commands of the Law. There is, too, an official who in modern times would be called a "beadle"; he keeps the lamp alight, opens and shuts the doors before and after the service, and hands the Scripture scroll to the reader for the day.

Serving two purposes.

As we watch the worshippers pray with their faces turned towards the Holy of Holies in the Temple, or we linger with the crowd after the service, we realise that the Synagogue serves two purposes. It is a meeting-house, where the affairs of the day can be discussed or a question of Jewish law debated without fear of interference from Herod's soldiers. But its chief function is to provide an alternative to the Temple service for those who are unable to attend it, a function having its origin probably in the Babylonian exile. In this way, especially in the provincial cities and villages, Judaism is kept alive and the study of the Law stimulated.



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A PLAN OF THE TEMPLE

CHAPTER VIII

A DAY IN JERUSALEM (*continued*)

The Temple

A glance at the Temple.

Let us now take a brief glance at the Temple itself—the third that has been built in the Holy City; for "he who has not seen Herod's building has never seen a beautiful edifice." Before the work of rebuilding the Temple was commenced, Herod procured 1000 waggons to bring the necessary stones, selected 1000 of the most experienced builders in the country, and, by presents of new garments, induced 1000 priests to be trained as masons and carpenters. Altogether no fewer than 18,000 workmen were employed in the work. They must have been very skilful, for the whole building is magnificent. The new outer Temple walls built by Herod are of such great beauty, being built of alternate layers of pure white and veined marble, and so highly polished that they dazzle the eyes in the sunshine. Even the Pharisees, whose moral sense and love for Jewish national usages Herod has so often flagrantly outraged, readily admit that in this he has done well, and has acted as a truly pious King might act.

The outer court.

We pass through one of these outer walls, three miles in compass, and enter the first of the many cloisters and galleries, with their cedar ceilings and mosaic floors. The first court is called the "Court of the Gentiles," and is the general place of assembly. It is here, under the shade of the fortress ("The Antonia") which King John Hyrcanus built as a protection for the Temple, and which Herod has strengthened, that public meetings are held, and the priests address the people. We enter the court through a cloister, where we are interested to find fragments of the first Temple. Relics and trophies of the many wars through which the Jewish people have fought are also to

be seen—shields, swords, flags, and trappings. But there also, from above the portal, stands defiantly the golden eagle of Rome, as a sign of Roman dominion, reflected in the white marble of the walls and the polished mosaic of the floor. Alongside of the cloister through which we have passed we catch a glimpse of the "Royal Cloister"—a magnificent colonnade of Corinthian pillars, longer by one hundred feet than any English cathedral. We rub shoulders with all kinds of people in this ante-court—Greeks, Romans, and Syrians—for strangers are permitted to assemble here, and there are costumes and colours from all lands. In the cloisters sit teachers with groups of pupils around them.

The two inner walls.

We then come to the second wall of the Temple, called the "Soreg." It is much lower and less massive than the greater outer wall, and, indeed, is much more of a fence than a wall. Over the entrance of this second wall is written a notice in bold Greek and Roman characters forbidding strangers to enter there. "No stranger is permitted to pass through this entrance," the notice runs, "into the Sanctuary and its surroundings. His punishment will be instant death; and, as he receives timely warning, his blood will be on his own head." Inside the Soreg there is a raised terrace all round the Temple area called the "Hel." The third wall of the Temple is no fewer than 40 cubits high (24 yards). There are seven massive gates. Six of them are covered with gold; but the one through which we enter is sheeted with bronze. Every evening it is closed, and twenty men are then needed to roll back its heavy doors, and drive down into the rock its bolts and bars.

The Forecourt of the Women.

Outside the inner wall is the "Forecourt of the Women," which leads up fifteen steps into the "Court of the Israelites." Men may enter the Forecourt of the Women, but no woman is allowed in the Court of the Israelites. The Forecourt of the Women has raised balconies from which the female worshippers may witness all public celebrations on special occasions, so as to escape being crushed in the throng.

The "drawing of the water."

It is here that the joyous festival of the "drawing of the water" takes place—the שִׂמְחַת בֵּית הַשּׁוֹאֵבָה—the thanksgiving to God for having granted the rain in its due season (that is to say, during the previous winter) and a prayer

that, just as last year's rains have enabled the harvest to be gathered, so the ensuing season may be favoured in a similar manner. If we wish to witness this ceremony, we must come on the Feast of Tabernacles (*Succoth*). On the evening of every day of the festival (except the 1st and 8th days and the intermediate Sabbath) a lamp of gold is erected at each corner of the court. Each lamp is in the form of a lofty pillar supporting a huge golden cup; and the pillars are so tall that the cups rise high above the

WEIGHING THE MONEY BROUGHT TO THE TEMPLE IN ANCIENT TIMES (see 2 Kings xii. 9, 10).

walls of the court. Four lads—sons of the priests—ascend the ladders placed against the pillars, carrying jars of oil, each containing 120 "logs" (about 90 pints), and pour the oil into the cups. Then they light the wicks, which are made of the worn-out garments of the priests, and the blaze is so brilliant that the whole of Jerusalem is lit up. The people, at the bidding of their pious leaders, "rejoice before the Lord," and dance with torches in their hands, or throw up lighted candles and knives in the air, and catch them again like jugglers. Then the Levites play on their harps, flutes, and cymbals. The trumpets sound, and the priests bless the people from the steps leading from the Court of the Israelites to the Forecourt of the Women, and one of

the great Rabbis of the time (such as Hillel) addresses the throng.

The "Songs of Degrees."

The scenes of joyous merry-making sometimes give way to the solemn chanting of the fifteen "Songs of Degrees" (Psalms cxx. to cxxxiv., so-called because of the fifteen steps on which they were recited), led by the choir and orchestra of Levites to the accompaniment of musical instruments of many kinds. The Levites take up their position for the purpose on the fifteen steps leading from the Court of the Israelites to the Forecourt of the Women. The leader of the choir of Levites recites the first verse of the last of the fifteen Songs of Degrees (Psalm cxxxiv.) alone. With the words, "Behold, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord, who stand in the House of the Lord in the night seasons," he calls upon all those assembled for the festivity to take up the song of praise to God. Then the remainder of the Levites continue with the next two verses of the Psalm: "Lift up your hands towards the Sanctuary, and bless ye the Lord. The Lord bless thee out of Zion; even He that made heaven and earth." The reply comes from the crowds around, in the words of Psalm xlvi. 7: "The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold." This part of the ceremony concludes with the repetition by the Levites of the fifth and sixth verses of Psalm cxxviii.: "May the Lord bless thee out of Zion: mayest thou see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life. Yea, mayest thou see thy children's children. Peace be upon Israel." Two priests, with trumpets in their hands, then mount the stairs to await the dawn of day, which is heralded by a long blast of the trumpets, and the people meanwhile chant a number of Psalms.

A dramatic procession.

When the dawn has come, a procession is formed, and, amid the music of the Levites and the joyous acclamations of the people, is led to a spring outside the Temple. One of the priests pours some water from the spring into a golden jug, and those who comprise the procession, with palms in their hands, wend their way back to the Temple, which they enter through the Water Gate. The multitude then gathers round the altar, which is surrounded by huge, slender branches of willow, which bow their heads in curves over the altar, thus indicating the close connection

of water with the growth of trees and flowers. Then the priest pours out the water from his flask on to the golden altar beneath him as a symbol of the festival. Once, when Alexander Jannæus, the wicked son of John Hyrcanus, desired to scoff at the old customs of his people, he chose the festival of the drawing of the water as an occasion for doing so, and poured the water on to the ground. He so angered the people that they pelted him with their *ethrogim* (citrons used in the festival), and he narrowly escaped with his life. Now, however, the people rise with one accord; their joy reaches, as it were, a climax, and they give forth a deafening shout of acclamation to the "good Giver of all good," and cry, as they strike their willow branches on the marble pavement of the Court: "הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא הוֹדוּ לַיְיָ כִּי טוֹב ("Help! we pray. Give thanks unto the Lord, for He is Good; for His mercy endureth for ever"). The festivities are then over, and those who have assembled to celebrate them now disperse.

The Court of the Priests.

Such is the imposing celebration which takes place on the Feast of Tabernacles in the Forecourt of the Women. But let us now leave this court, and proceed with our walk through the Temple. We mount the fifteen steps leading from the Forecourt of the Women, and enter, through the Nicanor or "Beautiful" Gate, into the Court of the Israelites, which is used by male Jews. From this Court there are three high steps leading into the Court of the Priests. On each side of this court, and against the walls of the Temple itself, are the "Treasuries" (where the Temple valuables are kept). The Temple Treasury is also a kind of Savings Bank, where the widow and the orphan may deposit their money and other belongings in safety. Here, too, are the Temple "strong-rooms" and the thirteen trumpet-shaped money-boxes into which the pious put their legal and voluntary offerings. Close at hand is the Temple slaughter-house, with its eight short stone columns surmounted by square blocks of cedar-wood. The planks are fitted with hooks on which the carcases are hung in rows, and below them are marble tables on which the bodies are flayed and washed. On the east side of the Court of the Priests is the altar, and the public are allotted a railed space from which they can watch the sacrifices. We may not enter

the Court of the Priests, but we can watch the morning sacrifice of a "lamb without blemish" being offered from the public space in the Court of the Israelites. Sacred music accompanies the burnt-offering, and, as it is Monday, Psalm xlviii. is chanted by the Levites. We can, indeed, repeat the words of the chronicler: "And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded: and all this continued until the burnt-offering was finished" (2 Chron. xxix. 28).

The Hall of Hewn Stone.

Perhaps what interests us most is a visit to the "Hall of Hewn Stone," to which we are conducted through the public entrance from the Court of the Israelites. The priests have a private entrance from their own court. We are to witness a sitting of the great Sanhedrin (Law Court or Council—from the two Greek words meaning "a sitting together" or "meeting"). We are early. But our time is not wasted, for the Hall is used for other purposes besides the sittings of the Sanhedrin. Thus we can watch the priests drawing lots for the daily service of the sacrifices. The priests form a circle round the Captain of the Temple, each holding up a finger. The Captain then mentions some small number, quite at random, and commences to count the uplifted fingers, removing the mitre of the priest at whom he starts for a moment, so that he may remember him. When he has completed the number which he pronounces, the priest with whom he closes is instructed to undertake the first duty in connection with the sacrifices, and so, in the same way, each service is provided for, those next in the line being told off in succession. Then we hear the priests pray. We have no difficulty in following what they say, for they are reciting the *Shema*: "Hear, O Israel! the Lord is our God, the Lord is One," the first prayer that Jewish boys and girls learn from their mothers' lips even to this day. We feel a thrill as we listen. For are not all Israel brethren, have they not one father?—and is not their *Shema* common to them all? The priests also say the blessings which precede the *Shema* in the present Jewish daily prayer-book. Then they recite the *Amidah* (a form of prayers containing benedictions, and included in almost every Jewish service) much as it is now worded—after nearly 2000 years.

How the prayers are said.

They say the *Amidah* quietly, for "to pray loudly is not necessary in prayer." Moreover, the saying runs: "He that raises the voice in prayer belongs to those of little faith, for he is afraid lest God should not hear him; and he that shouts in his prayers has the same foolish notions as the false prophets, whom Elijah mocked." Whilst they say the *Amidah*, they turn their faces in the direction of the Sanctuary. During the services they keep their feet together and do not talk to each other, remembering the command: "Keep thy foot when thou goest into the House of God, and be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools" (Ecclesiastes v. 1). When the prayer is finished, they step back three paces. We ask why they step back. The answer is simple. People who go to see a King or Queen usually depart from the royal presence by bowing and stepping backwards, so as not to turn their backs upon them. In the same way it is right and proper that, at the conclusion of prayer to the "King of Kings," we should also respectfully step back. So, too, the attitude of standing during prayer, with the feet together "at attention," is respectful to one's King and Master.

A sitting of the Sanhedrin.

But we have come principally to attend the sitting of the Sanhedrin. We do not have to wait long before the members enter—tall, grey-bearded elders, whom we cannot see without a feeling of reverence. They sit in a circle, in order that they may be able to see one another. The President or נָשִׂיא (*Nasi*) sits in the centre, and the Vice-President, who is called "Father of the Court," אַב בֵּית דִּין (*Ab Beth Din*) at his right. There are two secretaries, who record the decisions of the "Beth Din"; and facing the members sit three rows of scholars, who are ready to fill vacancies if necessary. The members of the Court sit on chairs, whilst the scholars in front have to be content with the floor. The business of this Court is not to try prisoners, but to decide certain national religious matters such as the Temple rites, whilst it also acts as a final Court of Appeal on all religious matters which the lower Courts are unable to determine. Sometimes, when a question is brought before the Court, one of the grave, grey old men rises, and pronounces that a tradition exists which covers the point; and then there is an end of the matter. But other questions arise, which have never pre-

viously been decided. In that case a discussion takes place; after a time a ballot is taken, and the opinion of the majority prevails.

Jewish law becoming complete.

This decision thereupon becomes part of the Law. Although it was not written down, it will be remembered by the elders, and when the same point arises again, they will follow this decision. In this way Jewish law is becoming more and more complete, until it covers almost every point that can be raised, just as in England the decisions of English judges add to the existing law from time to time. But whilst in England the judges only deal with points actually brought before them, the old members of the Sanhedrin often raise points themselves, and can even upset the decision of a lower Court without the matter being referred to them. Sometimes, however, the Sanhedrin decide questions which do not arise out of a particular case. Thus, for instance, we hear a discussion as to details of the Temple service, and it is decided what prayers are to be included and in what order they are to be said. When a murder has been committed and the murderer is unknown, the matter is considered a national one, and it is the duty of the Great Beth Din to determine which city, as being the nearest to the place of murder, is to bring the sacrifice of atonement, according to the Bible command: "If one be found slain in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee to possess it, lying in the field, and it be not known who hath slain him, then thy elders and thy judges shall come forth, and they shall measure unto the cities which are round about him that is slain. . . ." (Deuteronomy xxi. 1–9). Throughout the sitting we notice that all the points discussed are practical ones, dealing with the religious life of the people; the members of the Sanhedrin do not talk for the sake of talking.

Two Sanhedrin.

There are really two Sanhedrin. The "Great Beth Din" (House of Judgment), a sitting of which we have just been watching, deals only with religious matters, on which it is the highest authority, whilst the other Sanhedrin is a Court of Justice and also decides matters affecting the government of the country. The Great Beth Din is a much older body than the other Sanhedrin, for it is said to have succeeded the body of seventy elders, who conferred with Moses and issued laws, and also the assembly

of the "Men of the Great Synagogue" founded by Ezra. The total number of members of both bodies is generally seventy, besides the President (although as a rule they do not all attend at the same sitting), and they must all possess the qualities of scholarship, modesty, and popularity with their fellow-men, besides courage and physical strength. At least three members of the Sanhedrin are required to know a large number of languages, so that they can hear cases without an interpreter. As we have seen, the meetings of the Great Beth Din take place in the Hall of Hewn Stone in the Temple.

The Court of Justice.

If we wish to see the other Sanhedrin—the Court of Justice and Political Council—at work, we must leave the Temple for a short time and go to its meeting-place in the town. This body comprises members of the most influential families of the nobility and priesthood. In these days of King Herod its authority has declined, partly because of the influence of the Romans. In addition to these great Courts, each city (including Jerusalem) has a minor Sanhedrin of twenty-three or three members, according to the size and importance of the town. Matters which cannot be decided by the small bodies of three are first referred to the nearest Sanhedrin of twenty-three; then if necessary to one of the two Great Sanhedrin, according as the matter to be decided involves religious or other questions. Important matters can, however, only be decided by the last-named bodies.

How justice is done.

We are able to observe in this Court of Justice the remarkable care which is taken to ensure that justice is done to all, and yet that mercy is shown to the worst offenders. All kinds of regulations are in force to prevent undue harshness on the part of the judges. Thus, every member of the Court must be a father, for the possession of children makes a man gentler and more merciful in judgment. But at the same time the judges have to be very careful to give their decisions only in accordance with the rights of the case. "When the judge sits in judgment on his fellow-man, he should feel as though a sword were pointed at his heart," runs one saying (that is to say, he must feel that if he judges wrongly he ought to lose his life). "Woe to the judge who, knowing the unrighteousness of a decision, endeavours to make the

witnesses responsible for it. From *him* will God require an account," says another.

Support from the Bible.

The Rabbis quote passages from the Bible in support of their instructions to the judges. Thus:—

"Ye shall not be afraid of the face of man, for the judgment is God's" (Deut. i. 17).

"'Judge righteously' (Deut. i. 16) means that a judge shall deliberate the case carefully, and make it just in his own mind. Only then may he give his decision."

"The small as well as the great shall ye hear, and ye shall treat a case about the smallest coin with the same care as a case involving a hundred golden pieces" (after Deut. i. 17).

"In righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour" (Lev. xix. 15).

"That which is altogether just, shalt thou follow" (Deut. xvi. 20).

Very strict rules.

The judge is not allowed to hear any part of the case except in the presence of all the parties concerned, and there are very strict rules that he must not make any difference between those who are poor and ignorant and people who possess wealth and high position. If the judge has received any favour from one of the parties, he may not try the case, as there is then a possibility that he might not be quite impartial. In criminal cases the decision is always delayed until some day after the trial, unless the prisoner is to be set free. This is done in order that the judges may, on thinking over the matter, change their verdict if they had at first decided to condemn the prisoner, but if they had decided to acquit him, they are not permitted to alter their decision. Civil cases begin with a discussion either in favour of or against the defendant, but in criminal cases the trial always commences with arguments in favour of the accused. By these and other similar injunctions every possible protection is afforded to prisoners—indeed much more than is given in most countries to-day. Gamblers or usurers may not be witnesses; nor may near relations or intimate friends of the parties, as they may be prejudiced in their favour; nor enemies, as they may be prejudiced against them.

The death penalty.

The Court has not now the power of imposing the penalty of death, because this was taken away some years

ago by the Romans. But there are still elders who remember the days when the Court was able to sentence people to death, and they will tell us how the utmost care was taken to ensure that this terrible penalty was not inflicted without the most certain evidence of guilt. For instance, witnesses were addressed in this solemn manner: "Bear in mind the serious responsibility that rests upon you. In giving your evidence you must be sure of having really seen the act to which you testify. You must not speak from hearsay, nor from a mere conclusion of your own. You should know that cases of life and death are not like cases about property. In the latter cases the false witness can repay the property wrongly awarded on account of his false evidence, and he is forgiven; but in cases of life and death not only the blood of one unjustly condemned but that of his children and his children's children, until the end of time, will lie heavily on the soul of a false witness."

Protecting the prisoner.

The judges were required to fast all day on the days when they pronounced sentence of death. On the way to the place of execution, the prisoner was asked several times whether there was anything he had forgotten which might influence the judges in his favour. He had the privilege of returning to the Court as often as he pleased with new points, and a herald preceded him crying aloud: "This man is being led to execution, and this is his crime. . . . These are the witnesses against him. . . . If any one knows aught in his favour, let him come forth and speak." Whilst the prisoner was on the way to the place of execution, a man stood at the door of the Court with a flag, and if any new point was raised in the prisoner's favour he signalled to a man on horseback, who galloped to the place of execution and brought the prisoner back to the Court. It was very rarely, however, that people were sentenced to death. Indeed, a Court which pronounced the sentence more often than once in seven years (or even in seventy years according to one Rabbi) was called the "Court of Murderers." Whilst the condemned prisoner could always return to the Court and bring forward new points in his favour, the law was that a prisoner who was once acquitted could not be tried again on the same charge.

The Chamber of the Pancake Makers.

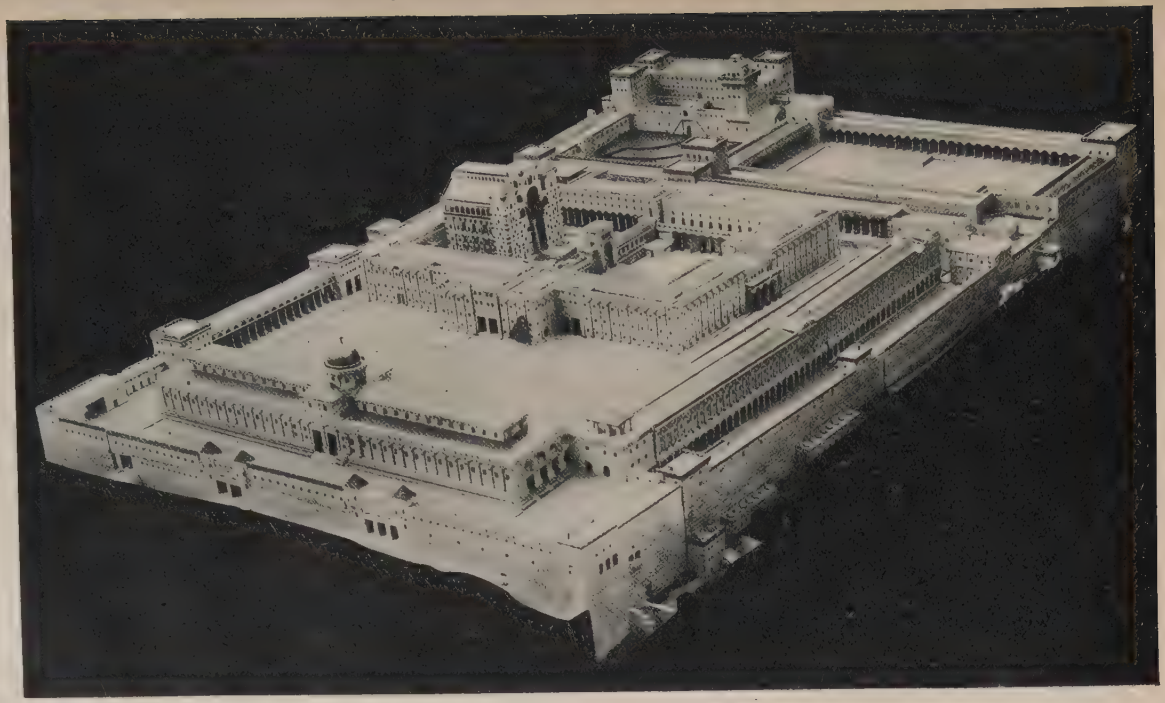
Now that we have seen the Court of Justice at work, we pay a flying visit to the "Chamber of the Pancake Makers," where twelve cakes are prepared daily, six for the morning, and six for the afternoon sacrifice; and we have time, too, to catch a glimpse of the Temple bakehouse and the chambers where, every morning, the meat-offering of the High Priest is baked and the showbread is prepared. Descending once more into the Forecourt of the Women, we visit in the four corners of the Court the chambers used for Oils, Wood, Nazarenes, and Lepers.

The Sanctuary.

We have now seen, as it were, something of the public life of the Temple—the prayers, the sacrifices, and the sitting of the Courts. But there still remains the Sanctuary itself. Although we may not ourselves visit the building, we learn that it is divided into two unequal portions—the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies, the former being about twice the dimensions of the latter. The Sanctuary lies immediately beyond the Court of the Priests, and is built of huge blocks of white stone. On the lofty roof can be seen a large number of gilded spikes, which are intended to keep away the birds. In the capacious porch hangs the huge golden Vine, the emblem of the Maccabean period. It rests on cedar beams, and spreads its branches under the cornices of the porch. Many a pilgrim to the Sanctuary adds a golden grape or cluster, and the Vine is now nearly breaking under the weight of its own fruit. Across the Holy of Holies, and dividing it from the Holy Place, hangs a curtain of blue, scarlet, white, and purple, in which are beautifully woven figures of various kinds. The curtain contains seventy-two cords, each cord containing twenty-four threads—six violet, six purple, six scarlet, and six of fine white cotton. The Holy of Holies is quite empty, and is only entered once a year—on the Day of Atonement—by the High Priest. The Holy Place contains the golden altar of incense (which is used for the morning and evening incense offering), the seven-branched golden candlestick (always kept alight), which replaced the iron one presented to the Temple by Judas Maccabeus, and the golden table of showbread, where the twelve loaves, which are replaced every Sabbath, are laid.

A bewildering sight.

We do not find any iron in the whole Temple building (for "a metal that is used for weapons of war, which



A PICTURE OF THE TEMPLE

(From the model built by the late Dr. Schick of Vienna)

shorten man's life, should not be used for the building of an altar, which lengthens it"). Nor was the painter's brush used. All the more work was given, therefore, to workmen who were skilled in gold and silver and copper, and to the weavers and robe-makers. Two things more we have time to notice: the wonderful organ with its hundred different notes; and the High Priest's gorgeous blue robe, tinkling bells, and high blue turban, which relieves the golden plate on his forehead with the words inscribed: "Holiness to God." We are almost bewildered by the various occupations followed in the service of the Temple, for we are told that, in addition to those we have mentioned, there are confectioners and makers of incense, inspectors of waterworks and fountains, a doctor, a keeper of the wells, a keeper of the robes, a lamp-trimmer, and a superintendent of the curtains. As we return to the cloisters from which we started on our journey through the Temple, we are able to see the Sanctuary at the summit of the long slope which leads from the Court of the Gentiles up into the Forecourt of the Women, thence into the Court of the Israelites, from that Court into the Court of the Priests, which itself is at the foot of the Sanctuary.

The Priests and Levites.

We learn some interesting particulars before we finally take our departure with regard to the priests and Levites whom we have seen at work in the Temple. There are several thousands of the former class. Great care is taken in their selection, for they must all be descendants of Aaron. They are divided into twenty-four classes, and they perform their various duties in the services and sacrifices in rotation each week. The High Priest not only is the highest religious official of the community, but acts as a kind of chief civil magistrate as well. He alone can offer the sacrifices whenever he wishes; the other priests may only do so in their order. On the Day of Atonement the High Priest alone may enter the Holy of Holies and burn incense there and perform the whole service. He presides over the Sanhedrin, and is generally the official head of the community. The Levites are a class inferior to the priests, to whom they act as servants. They are not permitted to officiate at the altar or enter the inner Sanctuary. Their duties consist mainly of supervising the animals offered for sacrifice, acting as choristers and

doorkeepers, and watching over the Temple buildings. The Captain of the Temple is responsible for the safety of the whole edifice as well as of money deposited in the Temple treasuries. Under him are a body of the Levites, who guard the gateways of the Temple night and day, and see that no unauthorised person enters through them. The priesthood is a richly endowed class, for they derive a substantial revenue from the sacrifices, first-fruits, first-born of beasts, and other taxes. The Levites, too, receive one-tenth of the harvest and other payments.

CHAPTER IX

A DAY IN JERUSALEM (*continued*)

In the Market-place

After the morning prayers are over—indeed, before they are finished in the Temple and the Synagogues—the great market-place becomes the scene of stirring, many-coloured life. This market-place is not like those one often finds in England, a square in the centre of the town. The market-place of Jerusalem is a long, wide street, such as, in an English town, would be called a Broadway or High Street. On each side of the street are rows of shops, booths, and tables. Fine cakes, made of the wheat of Ephraim, are being bought by the hawkers, who intend to sell them again at a profit in other parts of the town. There is a dearth of cakes this morning, and the hawkers are buying them up quickly, for "one peppercorn to-day is better than a basketful of pumpkins to-morrow." A poor little girl, with bits of wood in her ears instead of earrings, is gazing longingly at the cakes of figs and raisins which are for sale. All sorts of fish from the Lake of Tiberias attract the attention of the young students, who are making their way to their school. House decorations and personal ornaments of all kinds are to be had—even false teeth with gold and silver wire to fasten them.

The market-place.

But who is that curious-looking man with the bald head and the black face? He is selling shoes, and the people seem to be making fun of him. Buyers pause before his stall and ask: "How much for the shoes?" "Ten ducats a pair," he answers; "or I may sell for nine, but certainly not less than eight." This causes great laughter and uproar in the market, and the shoe-seller is driven away amid the jeers of the crowd. We inquire the reason for the incident, and are told that the man is a native of Athens, the capital

A shoe-seller's insolence.

of Greece. He recently visited the Holy City, and on his return ridiculed the place and its inhabitants. The people were naturally angry. They accordingly sent one of the citizens to Athens to induce the man to return to Jerusalem, when they would have an opportunity of punishing him for his insolence. The citizen duly arrived at Athens, and, walking alone with the man, said: "See, the lace of my shoe is broken; take me, I pray, to the shoemaker." The cobbler repaired the lace, and the man from Jerusalem paid him a coin in value much more than the worth of the shoes. The next day he broke the lace of the other shoe, and paid the shoemaker an equally large sum for repairing that.

The biter bit.

"Why!" said the Athenian, "shoes must be very dear in Jerusalem, if thou payest such a price merely for repairing a lace." "Yes," replied the man from Jerusalem, "they can be sold for nine ducats, and, even in the cheapest times, from seven to eight." "Then it would be a profitable employment for me to take shoes from my city, and sell them in thine." "Yes, indeed," was the reply, "and if thou wilt let me know of thy coming, I will put thee in the way of customers." So the man of Athens, who had made merry over the people of Jerusalem, bought a large stock of shoes, and met his friend outside the gate of the city. There he was told that, before a stranger might enter and sell goods in Jerusalem, he must shave his head and blacken his face. The Athenian readily consented, with the result we have already seen. He will probably take his lesson to heart; but we shall not be pleased with the incident, if we remember the saying of the Rabbis: "Whosoever does not persecute them that persecute him, whosoever takes an offence in silence, he who does good because of love, he who is cheerful under his sufferings—they are the friends of God."

Learned discussions.

We notice two old men in the market-place discussing the meaning of various passages in the Bible. One of them asks the real explanation of the verse: "There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it. Now there was found in it a poor, wise man, who, by his wisdom, delivered the city" (Eccles. ix. 14–15). The second old man gives the following beautiful reply: "The 'little city' is man, and the 'few men' are his

different qualities. The 'King' who besieged it is man's evil inclination, and the 'great bulwarks' he built around it are evil deeds. The 'poor wise man' who saved the city is the good actions, which the poorest may readily perform." Then the scholar who has given this reply asks his friend the meaning of the saying of one of the Rabbis: "Repent the day before thy death." The answer comes: "Consider every day to be thy last; be ever ready with penitence and good deeds, for thou dost not know on what day thou wilt die." Then they discuss which of a number of the sayings of the Rabbis is the best. Finally the one scholar chooses: "The place honours not the man, it is the man who gives honour to the place." His friend prefers: "If a word spoken in its time is worth one piece of money, silence in its time is worth two."

Varied wares.

But let us look again at the motley crowd of vendors in the market. One man offers grape syrup for sale. Another recommends his Egyptian lentils. A third has cummin (a bitter plant) and turns a pepper-mill. Where there is room in front of the houses, the street is turned into a workshop, and the workmen are so industrious that, even if Hillel himself or another great Rabbi should pass by, they are not expected to interrupt their business by rising, for they would then be robbing their masters of their time. Here a tailor is attaching fine fringes to a *tallith*. There an armourer is hammering at the handle of a sword. Yonder a shoemaker is mending a pair of wooden sandals for a lime-worker, for the lime would burn shoes made of leather. The workman quotes the proverb to the cobbler: "Step on the thorns while thou hast thy sandals on thy feet." As he espies a teacher beating one of his pupils, he laughingly offers him a sandal, for they are favourite weapons to chastise a child.

Fun and superstition.

An Athenian, wishing to make fun of the tailor, hands him a broken mortar, and asks him to sew it. The tailor, believing that it is right to "answer a fool according to his folly," gives the man from Athens a handful of sand, and tells him that he will sew his mortar if he will first spin a thread out of the sand. In the less crowded and shadier side lanes, such as the streets of the butchers or the wool-combers, still more handicrafts are to be seen, and even flax is hackled in the street. A young girl is about to pass

between two men, as she tries to make her way along the crowded street, but is prevented from doing so by one of them, for it is considered a bad omen if a dog or a woman pass between two men, or a man between a dog and a woman, or between one of the latter and a palm-tree—such being the superstition of the time.

Busier still.

The market grows busier still. Buyers, sellers, and onlookers crowd in from all the gates. At the lower corner, by the market gate, the job workmen are waiting. At the market gate, in the very centre of the town, stand the cunning donkey-drivers. Their "fares" are somewhat curiously arranged, and it is a standing saying to people who do not succeed in business: "Go and learn a lesson from the public tariff of the donkey-drivers—'ten miles for one zuz, eleven miles for two!'" They let none go by without making a remark. A grave, dreamy-looking man, who seems ill, hastens past. "The gentleman has certainly had a bad dream," says one of the donkey-drivers. "To which of the twenty-four interpreters of dreams does he mean to go?"

"A hundred cuppings a penny."

A barber elbows his way through the crowd. "Good morning, Sir Surgeon," they call to him. "How's trade?" "A hundred cuppings a penny!" cries he. (A "cupping" is the operation of drawing blood from the body into a cup; barbers in these days also practise surgery.) A Rabbi with a ruddy complexion accidentally knocks against an old woman, who gets in his way. "How red you are, old man," she screams; "you are either a wine-bibber, or some pawnbroker, or a pig-breeder." "No," he replies, "my face is red because of some new tradition I have heard; for 'a man's wisdom maketh his face to shine'" (Eccles. viii. 1). We mentioned just now that the donkey-drivers were cunning. "Let no man," runs a saying, "make his son a donkey-driver, for that is a thievish calling." "Donkey-drivers," says another, "are nearly all godless."

Charms.

Amidst the bustle of the market, we notice a booth where a man has just purchased what appears to be a tooth. We ask him to what use he proposes to put it, and he replies that he has been suffering from sleeplessness, and a tooth of a living fox is said to be a charm that will bring about sleep, whilst a tooth of a dead fox will prevent sleep.

On inquiry at the booth, we learn that we can obtain a grasshopper's egg as a charm against ear-ache; and the nail which has been pierced through the body of a man who has been crucified as a remedy for swelling. If we have fever, we are recommended to go to a cross-road, and seize the first ant with a burden that we see crawling along. We are then to place it in a copper tube, which must be covered with lead, shake the tube, and say: "What thou carriest on me, that I carry on thee." We are told that we may have charms in the form of grains of wheat wrapped in leather, or splinters of wood, or a metal plate, or strips of parchment with inscriptions upon them.

The Rabbis and superstition.

It must not be supposed, however, that belief in these things represents the authoritative teaching of the Rabbis. They are strongly opposed to anything, we are told, in the nature of superstition, although they have no objection to remedies for illnesses which actually do cure them. In the same way special prayers and psalms (such as Psalm xci.) are recommended to invalids only if they are recited as prayerful meditation. If, however, the sick person recites them with the idea that they will cure him, the practice is condemned as superstition. We, too, do not believe in the charms of which we have just heard, and as we have other remedies for the illnesses which they are supposed to cure, we leave our acquaintance with the fox's tooth and wish him more sleep at night. But, before he has gone far, the sleepless man is accosted by a doctor, who offers his professional services free of charge. They are, however, politely refused, for "a physician who professes to cure for nothing is often worth nothing."

Herod's palace.

If now we go through the market gate and across the lower town, we can pass through the gate in the wall of the Maccabees into the open country. Then, turning to the south, we come to the palace of Herod ("The Antonia"), which is even more magnificent than the Temple itself. It is, in fact, a citadel as well as a palace, for it is surrounded by a high wall on which towers are erected. These are designed to overlook the Temple. Moreover, in case of rebellion (which Herod is only too well aware his anti-national yielding to Roman forms may incite) they can be used to overawe the sacred building, which the populace can easily turn into a fortress. Within are two halls, each

the size of the Temple Sanctuary, with couches for a hundred guests, and many other chambers richly furnished. The Antonia (so named in honour of Mark Antony) contains indeed every kind of dwelling and other convenience — there are even baths and broad courts for encampments. There are colonnades all round, courts open to the air in which everything is green, and groves of shrubberies with long walks among them. The shrubberies are watered by means of metal fountains which receive their water from an aqueduct entering the city to the south; and just by the fountains may be seen a number of tame pigeons, which are called by Herod's name. The palace and fortress is connected with the Temple by a sloping gangway.

Another market.

Close by the palace there is also a crowd. But it is nothing to compare with the merry confusion of the great lower market. Here it is quieter and more aristocratic. The favourite handicrafts of King Herod are also to be seen here. Sculptors and florists are to the fore. Yonder is a goldsmith displaying a vine made of hammered metal. Close at hand is a potter who has laid out his vessels and vases made of black and white clay. And on the other side of the street may be seen the finest figs to be had in Jerusalem. That old man dressed all in white, barefooted, is an Essene. He is a stranger in Jerusalem, and is looking about to see if he can find some one to direct him to the house of the chief of his sect.

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CHAPTER X

A DAY IN JERUSALEM (*continued*)

THE SCHOOL AND HOUSE OF STUDY

THE man who is walking so fast yonder is a Rabbi or teacher, for one of the six things scholars may not do is to be late in entering the house of instruction. (The other five forbidden actions are to walk about in public with scent on one's clothes, to wear broken shoes, to go out alone at night, to speak much to women in the streets, and to idle away one's time with ignorant people.) Just behind him is a man with a cloth carelessly tied round his head; he is taking his son hastily to school, and has evidently only just risen. A friend stops him and asks: "Why such haste?" The father replies: "Do not our sages teach that the duty of taking the child to study is prior to everything, and that one ought not to take breakfast in the morning before accompanying one's sons to school?" The father correctly interprets the spirit of the time, for to no subject do the Rabbis attach more importance than the education of the young. "God gives to man children," they say; "wherefore? That he should teach them righteousness and virtue, as it is said of Abraham, 'I know him that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and righteousness.'" "Whoever leaves a son after him studying the Torah," runs one of their sayings, "is considered as if he had never died." "The world exists only by the breath of school children," is another maxim, "and a town which has no school and no school children should be demolished." The story is told of a journey made by several learned men whose duty it was to establish schools and promote instruction wherever they found it necessary. They came to one town in

The guardians of the city.

which they found no trace of education being given. With indignation they exclaimed to the citizens: "Bring before us the guardians of the city." The soldiers were summoned, but the sages said they did not want these. Then the magistrates were brought before them, but these, too, were rejected. "These are not the guardians of the city," the wise men cried. "Who are, then?" inquired the citizens with astonishment. "The guardians of the city are the teachers," was the reply.

A Jerusalem school.

Let us then enter one of the schools of the city where its "guardians" are at work. It is divided into two parts, one being for the younger children, and the other, a kind of university college, for older students. The younger pupils are admitted at six or seven years of age, and are taught at first to recite the *Shema* and the verse: "The Law which Moses commanded us is the heritage of the congregation of Jacob"—to teach them from their earliest years that they are to receive something which has been handed down to them from their ancestors. Then they are taught passages from the Bible, afterwards receiving instruction in the explanations of and additions to the Bible laws which have been handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation by the sages. We do not find large classes, for the Rabbis are mindful of the health of the children and the teacher. They do not permit one teacher to have more than twenty-five children in a class, and where this number is exceeded he has the assistance of a pupil teacher. When the weather permits, as now (for it is a summer's day), some of the classes are taught in the fields—in the healthy air and the sunshine. In those classes which are held indoors some of the pupils sit on the ground; others sit on stools, or cushions, or forms.

Rules for pupils.

We enter a class where the master is sitting, and the boys are standing in a semi-circle round him. The Rabbis have laid down elaborate rules for the guidance of both pupils and teachers. Some of them may seem unnecessary in modern times, but they serve to illustrate how important the school is to the Rabbis:—

"The pupil must attend the school regularly."

"No pupil is allowed during lessons to leave his seat for any purpose without permission of the master."

"No pupil may ask questions which have no reference to the subject taught."

"Two pupils may not ask a question at the same time."

"No pupil should ask a question at the moment when the master enters the school."

"Pupils must prepare and learn the lessons and exercises given them for each day thoroughly."

Pupils are enjoined to pay great respect to their teachers, and "he who learneth of another one chapter, one sentence, one verse, or even one word should behave towards him with the greatest respect." The teacher must never be addressed by his name; the pupil is not permitted to occupy the teacher's seat or pray before his face or behind his back.

Rules for teachers.

Teachers are told to be calm and patient and persevering.

The pupil is told not to pester the teacher with too many questions, but the teacher must repeat the same thing over and over again in order that the pupils may understand it. As the saying runs: "If you see a student whose study is as hard as iron to him, the fault lies with his teacher, for he has not explained the matter sufficiently clearly."

The neglectful teacher is thus rebuked: "The teacher who neglects his pupils, who goes out and leaves them to themselves, or who in the midst of instruction occupies himself with other work, of him it is said: 'Cursed be he who doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully' (Jer. xlviii.)."

The Rabbis recommend instruction being given step by step, for, "if you attempt to grasp too much at once, you grasp nothing at all."

The teaching must be concise, for "that which can be told the pupil in one word should not be imparted in three."

Finally, the teacher is enjoined: "Let the honour of the pupil be as dear to thee as thine own, for, while the child is of tender years, a foundation will be laid for the qualities of courtesy, gentleness, and proper regard for good fame and reputation."

"There is no blemish in her."

Hebrew is not the only language taught, for Latin, Syriac, and Greek are also learnt by the pupils. Greek is considered highly by some of the Rabbis, one of whom re-

marked: "'There is no blemish in her' may be applied to Greek, for it distinguishes itself by a keen sense of that which is perfectly noble."

Four kinds of pupils.

Astronomy, botany, and other sciences are taught to the elder pupils; gymnastics also forms part of the curriculum, and the Rabbis have a saying: "It is the duty of every father to have his son taught swimming." In one of the classes the teacher has in his hand a leather strap which is used for the purposes of punishment. Some of the pupils seem to be afraid of the instrument; they are evidently those mentioned in the proverb: "When a schoolmaster enters the schoolroom with a cane in his hand, only those are afraid who are accustomed to be beaten every day." Some of the boys in this class seem to be clever, but others are very backward, and the teacher tells the boys that they consist of four different kinds—(1) those who learn quickly and forget quickly: whatever they gain from what they learn, says the teacher, disappears with their loss; (2) those who learn with difficulty and forget with difficulty: what they lose at first disappears with what they gain afterwards; (3) those who learn quickly and forget with difficulty: theirs is a happy lot in life; (4) those who learn with difficulty and forget quickly: they are indeed unlucky.

Valuable goods.

A pupil discusses with the teacher whether the calling of a scholar is better than that of a merchant. The teacher replies by telling him the following story: A distinguished scholar was on a voyage at sea, and on board the same ship were some merchants with their goods. In the course of conversation they asked the scholar what was the nature of his goods. "My goods," he replied, "are of very great value." Knowing, however, that the scholar had no cargo on board the ship, they ridiculed his assertion. After sailing some distance from shore, the ship was overtaken by pirates, who robbed the ship of its cargo, and took the very clothes the passengers were wearing, when they were of any value. Passengers and crew were only too thankful to escape with their lives, and clothe themselves with the rags which the pirates rejected. As the scholar did not wear any valuable clothes, he was spared by the pirates, and was landed at a small town, together with his fellow-passengers, who presented a sorry sight indeed.

The positions reversed.

The learned man, whose reputation had gone before him, was asked and consented to deliver lectures on various scientific subjects, which he handled in a masterly fashion. The lectures excited great interest, and attracted large audiences from all the neighbouring towns, with the result that the scholar not only found that his lectures paid him very well, but soon won the friendship of the leading men of the place. He settled down, and became an influential member of the community. Fate did not smile so kindly on his former fellow-passengers. They had lost all their possessions, and being clothed in rags, and being merchants and having no trade or profession, they found it impossible to get employment. Seeing the great position their former fellow-passenger now held in the town, they called on him, and asked for his help. This he willingly gave them, and also secured them employment, reminding them how right he was in describing *his* goods as "valuable."

"Travellers," "guests," and "masters."

The teacher then gives a lesson on "Self-control." He quotes the saying of the Rabbis that "our passions and temptations are at first like 'travellers,' who stay with us for a short time only; then, like 'guests' on a visit, they stop with us for a longer time; until at last (unless of course we prevent it in time) they become our 'masters,' staying with us always." He teaches his pupils, too, to work for themselves, and not to depend on others. "Let no man say," he tells them, "'My father was a righteous man. As a reward for his righteousness it will be well with me;' or, 'My brother was a good man, and I shall reap the benefit of his merits.' Abraham could not save Ishmael, and Jacob could not save Esau: every man must work out his own salvation."

A question of precedence.

After the lesson, questions are always invited. One pupil asks: "Why is it that in the fifth commandment, 'Honour thy father and thy mother,' the father is mentioned first, whereas in another part of the Bible (Lev. xix. 3) it is said: 'Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father,' there putting the mother before the father?" The teacher gives the following reply: "A child will naturally *honour* his mother more than his father, for she treats him with more kindness and tender speech. Therefore, stress is laid on the duty of honouring the father, and accordingly he is

named first when honour is commanded. A child will naturally *fear* (*i.e.* respect) his father more than his mother, for it is he who gives orders, and punishes, and is the head of the household; so that children are specially told to respect their mother, and, when 'fear' is commanded, it is she who is first mentioned."

Telling tales —of two kinds.

One of the boys then suddenly comes to the teacher whimpering, and complaining that he has been robbed of his cap by another pupil. The teacher tells him gently not to be childish or to tell tales, for he is probably as bad as his comrade. "If you ask me to remove the mote from that lad's eyes," he says, "I can very well say to you, 'Take out the beam from your own.'" Then he has the two boys together, and gives them a lesson on sociability. There are four kinds of men, he tells them—(1) he who says, "What is mine is mine and what is thine is thine"—he is neither good nor bad; (2) he who says, "What is mine is thine, and what is thine is mine"—some people think he is a fool, but others consider that he is like the Essenes, a communist, desiring everyone to share his goods and opportunities with others; (3) he who says, "What is mine is thine and what is thine is thine" is a generous man, for he places himself at the service of others; (4) he who says, "What is thine is mine, and what is mine is mine"—he is a wicked man.

A cheese and eggs story.

And then he makes the boys friends with each other and himself by telling them a little story. "'Fetch me some cheese and eggs,' said an Athenian once to a little boy. The boy did as he was asked. 'Now, my boy,' said the stranger, 'tell me, which of these cheeses were made of the milk of white goats, and which of the milk of black goats?' 'Thou art older than I and more experienced,' said the shrewd little Hebrew. 'Tell me first which of these eggs came from white, and which from black hens.'"

In the House of Study.

We then leave the school, and listen to what goes on inside the House of Study. The Rabbi has been discussing with the students the lives and teaching of some of the great prophets. One of these students asks the Rabbi whether, seeing that the prophets were great teachers like himself, it is not possible for prophets to exist even now. The Rabbi answers in the words of the prophet Amos (vii. 14): "'I am no prophet, neither am I a prophet's son,'" and

then he repeats the saying of one of the Rabbis that "a scholar is greater than a prophet." "He only is poor," he adds, "who has no knowledge, for it is said that 'a man who has knowledge has all things, but he who has no knowledge has nothing.'"

A good proverb.

"But I will give you a good proverb on which to ponder," he continues. "He who has more learning than good deeds is like a tree with many branches but with weak roots. The first great storm will throw it to the ground, as the prophet said (Jer. xvii. 6): 'For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.' He whose good works are greater than his knowledge is like a tree with fewer branches but with strong and spreading roots, a tree which all the winds of heaven cannot uproot, as it is said (Jer. xvii. 8): 'He shall be as a tree planted by the waters, that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green: and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.'" A young man then comes to see the Rabbi. The latter asks him: "My son, what is thy calling?" The young man answers: "I am a scribe." "Then be very careful, my son," exclaims the Rabbi, "for thine is a Divine labour." In these days very great importance is attached to the copying of the words of the Law, which must be done with absolute correctness. As the Law itself is deemed to be sacred, so the multiplication of its copies is considered a holy task.

A short and a long prayer.

The time for prayer arrives whilst we are still in the House of Study. One student cuts his prayer short, and another continues to pray long after all the rest have finished. Some of their colleagues remark to the Rabbi: "How quick this one was over his prayers; and how long that one." They call the one "the shortener," and the other "the extender." But the Rabbi replies: "The short prayer of the one is not shorter than the prayer of Moses, who, when asking God to cure Miriam of leprosy, simply said: 'Heal her now, O God, I beseech Thee.' The prayer of the other pupil is not longer than the prayer of Moses, when the children of Israel rebelled against God in the wilderness, for he then prayed forty

days and forty nights. Prayers may be shortened and lengthened according to different circumstances and the needs of the times."

The traveller and the date-tree.

Before we leave, another teacher asks the learned Rabbi for his blessing. "You put me in mind," he says, "of a certain man who, having travelled in a desert nearly a whole day, found himself very hungry, thirsty, and tired. Necessity obliged him to travel onward, till at last he came to a most enchanting spot, where grew a fine date-tree, watered by a small rivulet. The weary traveller seated himself in the shade of the tree, plucked some of its delicious fruit, and refreshed himself. Grateful for the unexpected relief, he thus addressed his benefactor: "Tree, tree! what blessing can I give thee? Shall I wish thee towering branches, beautiful foliage, and refreshing shade? Thou hast them already. Plenty and exquisite fruit? Thou art already blessed therewith. A refreshing stream to moisten thy roots? Thou hast no lack of it. The only thing I can wish thee, then, is that every one of thy twigs, wherever they be planted, may flourish like thee!"

The only blessing.

"Now, my friend," the Rabbi continues to his colleague, "what blessing can I wish thee? Learned and wise thou art already. Of riches thou hast plenty. Thy children are many. I can therefore only hope that all thy descendants may be blessed like thee, and have the desire and ability to be as wise and learned as thou art." We ask the Rabbi in conclusion why he tells so many stories and parables. "Do not look upon a parable lightly," he replies, in the words of one of the Rabbis, "for some difficult passages of Scripture may be explained through them, just as one may find things that are lost in a dark place by the aid of a candle."

"Iron sharpens iron."

The students of the college are told to treat their Rabbi with great respect. Sometimes they pay him flattering compliments, and we hear of one enthusiastic student who addressed his teacher as "the lamp and shield-bearer of Israel," "prince of the people," "leader of the nation," and "father of the world." The students are recommended to study together, whether they are clever or backward, "for," say the Rabbis, "just as a small piece of wood by friction sets fire to a larger one,

so do the younger and less clever pupils awaken and stimulate the older and more able ones." "Iron sharpens iron," they continue, "and just as one piece of iron sharpens another piece, so does one student sharpen the other, because the discussions that arise between them enable them to understand better the subject they are learning." The Rabbis themselves, with much truth and wisdom, adopt the following as their motto: "I have learned much from my teachers, more from my schoolfellows, but most of all from my pupils."

How charity should be given.

Returning to the market-place, we notice a Rabbi who has stopped a man giving charity to a beggar. "Thou hadst better not have given at all than have bestowed alms so openly, and put the poor man to shame," he says. "Rather be thrown into a fiery furnace than bring any one to public shame," he continues in the words of one of the sages. And then the Rabbi tells the man that it is kinder to lend money to the poor than to give it, for it prevents them from feeling ashamed of their poverty. "Do not think," he continues, "that doing good to the poor only consists of giving money. For kindness is more than charity. Charity is with money only—kindness includes both money and pleasant words. Charity can only be given to the poor, but kindness can be bestowed on both poor and rich. Charity can only be given to the living; kind, loving words can, however, be spoken both to the living and of the dead."

Different kinds of charity.

"He who gives his mite to the poor," say the sages, "shall be blessed with six blessings; but he who gives with words of sympathy shall be blessed with eleven blessings." "There are four kinds of people who give charity," the Rabbi goes on: "First, he who desires to give but that others should not give—he is unkind to others, for the giving of charity brings blessings to the giver; secondly, he who desires that others should give, but will not give himself—he is unkind to himself; thirdly, he who gives himself and wishes others to give—he is a saint; fourthly, he who will not give himself and does not wish others to give—he is a wicked man." Moreover, "the house that does not open to the poor shall open to the physician," for "even the birds in the air despise the miser." But "he who gives charity in secret is greater than Moses himself."

A funeral.

We pass a funeral procession on our way, and we remember the saying of the sages that it is a great kindness to attend funerals and to pay respect to the dead. Kindness shown to the living is sometimes bestowed in the hope of its being returned. Respect to the dead, however, springs from pure motives — doing right for right's sake, without the hope of reward. "The tears which are shed," said one Rabbi, "when a good man dies, God gathers and keeps among His most precious things."

In the heat of the day.

The fresh morning breeze blowing up from the sea has now died away. The heat of the day begins to make itself felt, and the great water-tank by the cinnamon trees in the middle of the market-place is surrounded by young and old. Here a young man from the province of Galilee has spread a square of linen cloth on the ground; he sets on it a large vessel full of oil from Lebanon, and beside this he places a huge water-melon as an attraction to customers. Near by is a man with red and blue threads drawn through one of his ears, green and yellow ones through the other. He is a dyer, and shows his profession in this way. Sometimes the crowd timidly makes way for one of the royal servants on horseback. "That must be a clever fellow," says a man in the crowd, referring to the royal servant. He has noticed the man's beard, and he recalls the saying that a thin beard denotes shrewdness, a thick beard indicates stupidity, whilst a beard parted in the middle means that the owner is too cunning to be cheated by any one.

The amphitheatre.

As we pass along, we stroll just outside the city, and we turn into a large building, whither great crowds are making their way. This is King Herod's amphitheatre, which he has presented to the city. Every five years a great athletic gathering takes place in Jerusalem, and King Herod spares no expense in trying to rival the great Olympic Games, which are held at Athens. The gathering is celebrated in honour of the Roman Emperor, Augustus, and athletes from all countries are invited to contend for the costly prizes and the silver and golden trophies which Herod has provided. All kinds of Greek sports are to take place. Look! some young men are starting for a race. They are naked, and they wear on their head a

curious broad-rimmed hat. Wrestling and jumping bouts follow. And then some older men play quoits, and even one who is clad in priestly clothes takes part in the game. Then chariot races take place, and musicians and actors perform. Others box, lift heavy weights, play with balls, and exercise their skill at archery. The girls play a game with balls, somewhat like tennis. Afterwards the horns blow, and the gladiators (or fighters) enter the arena. The successful ones receive a palm, and those who have won their contest on their first appearance receive a little tablet with the inscription "*Spectatus*" (a Latin word meaning "distinguished"). The crowd applauds the winners of the various contests, and crowns of olives are placed on the heads of the champions.

A note of disapproval.

But there are some in the audience who have come from curiosity only, and do not altogether approve of these games. One of them says: "He who frequents the stadia and the circuses and sees there the magicians and the tumblers sits in the 'seat of the scornful'" (referring to the first verse of Psalm i.). Another remarks: "Lord of the world! never do I set foot again in the theatre and the circus of the 'people of the earth.'" They shake their heads in doubt as to the wisdom of it all. They see in the wrestling of naked youths something which does not seem to fit in with the old customs and religious observances. They still cry, as did their ancestors "by the rivers of Babylon": "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning" (Psalm cxxxvii.). But the Jerusalem they mean is one without a Herod and his foreign practices. They do not all, however, have such bad opinions of Herod's amphitheatre, for we hear a pious man remark: "We must thank the heathens that they let clowns appear in the theatres and circuses, and thus find innocent amusement for themselves. Otherwise they could not meet one another without quarrelling."

CHAPTER XI

A DAY IN JERUSALEM (*continued*)

A Visit to an Inn

The burning glare of noonday.

The June sun is now burning more fiercely than ever. As the crowd gradually disperses from both markets, the white marble of the palaces throws back the burning glare of noonday, and the Temple shines above the town like a sea of light. If we look up to the towers of the city of David or to Herod's palace, we are dazzled and blinded. The streets are almost deserted, and the silence is only broken here and there by the cries of a water-seller or a hawker of vinegar. Workmen and donkey-drivers, resting in the shade, dip their bread into a sort of whey, called Babylonian *cuthach*. Other workmen fare better. For instance, those in the dye-house dine off a soup made of grilled meat and slices of onions, and drink *zuman* (water mixed with bran) with it. But on the goldsmith's table there stands a large jug of wine, and a vessel with a bottom of finely woven Egyptian palm-fibre to strain the wine. Juicy fruits stand about for a second course. We too are hungry and thirsty. What shall we drink? Median or Babylonian beer, Egyptian or country cider?

A visit to an inn.

We do not have to look far for an innkeeper, who will serve us with one or the other. As we enter, the wife of the landlord is having a meal with one of her servants; for kind treatment of servants is commanded by the Law. "Do not eat fine bread and give black bread to your servant, do not sleep on cushions and leave him straw," says the Jewish Law. She has, however, first fed the dog, who keeps watch at night, and she thus again follows the rule of the Rabbis: "None should sit down to his own meals until he has seen that all the animals dependent upon his care are provided for."

We notice, too, what respect is paid to the innkeeper and his wife by their children. For the Rabbis teach: "A child must not stand nor sit in the place which his father is in the habit of occupying. He must not contradict his father, and, when he speaks of him, he must use a term of respect, such as 'My honoured father.'" But the teacher is to be honoured even more than parents, for the saying runs: "You should revere the teacher more than your father. The latter only brought you into this world; the former indicates the way into the next." This does not mean, however, that one is not to learn from his father, or that a father should not teach his children, for the Rabbis add: "But blessed is the son who has learnt from his father: he shall revere him both as his father and as his teacher; and blessed is the father who has instructed his son." *Respect to parents.*

In the street of the woolcombers we passed just now some huge jugs standing out in the sun. They contained wine for the heat to ferment. Let us turn into the inn where they are standing, and inquire if we can have a dish of locusts baked with flour, or with honey, or simply salted—for they are served in all these three ways. How crowded it is! And what a noise greets us! Before the host can take our order, a coppersmith (we can tell what he is by his apron) thrusts a vessel under our noses, and cries: "Fools! to eat without drinking is wasting one's own blood." A soldier joins us. With the words "The gentlemen seem to be scholars," he clinks cups with the coppersmith, and shouts loud enough to deafen us: "This glass to the health of the Rabbis and teachers." "What an ass you are!" cries a third; "what do you know of Rabbis? People say where there are swords there are no books." The soldier asks the landlord to buy some jewellery from him which has obviously been stolen. Mine host reminds the soldier that the receiver of stolen goods is worse than the thief. *Locusts and wine.*

> "'Twas not the mouse within the house
> Committed theft.
> It was the hole where what it stole
> It brought and left."

"Your God is a thief," says the soldier to an old man in the corner (evidently wishing to pick a quarrel), "for He *"Your God is a thief."*

took a rib secretly away from Adam." "I would that we had every day such a thief," is the reply, "who would take something without value and replace it with something alive." "You are like the person," the old man continues, "who cried, 'Somebody has taken from me an earthenware jar.' 'Well, what is the trouble?' was the reply of his friend. 'And he has left behind a silver jar,' the man continued. 'You fool!' his friend very properly replied. 'I wish he would pay *me* a like burglary visit.'"

The modest origin of women.

The soldier is still not satisfied, and he asks: "But why was Eve made from a rib out of all the parts of the body?" The old man replies: "Woman was not formed from Adam's head, so that she might not be haughty; nor from his eye, so that she might not be too eager to look at everything; nor from his ear, so that she might not be an eavesdropper; nor from his mouth, so that she might not be a chatterer; nor from his heart, lest she should become jealous; nor even from his hand, so that she might not be tempted to steal; nor from his foot, lest she should run about too much. She was made from Adam's rib, a hidden, modest part of the body, so that she, too, might be modest and not fond of show."

A salt story.

"But I'll tell you a little story," says the old man, wishing to change the subject (for drunken Roman soldiers can become dangerous): "An Athenian once said to a little Hebrew boy, by way of a joke: 'Here is a *pruta*' (a coin worth less than a farthing), 'bring me something for it of which I may eat enough for myself, leave some for my host, and carry some home to my family.' The witty boy went and bought him salt. 'Salt!' exclaimed the Athenian, 'I did not tell thee to bring salt.' 'Nay,' replied the boy slyly, 'didst thou not say, bring me something of which I may eat, leave some, and take some home?'" The soldier is pacified, for even the Romans like the stories and maxims with which the Rabbis illustrate all their teaching.

Counting the stars.

But soon he tries conclusions with the pious old man once more. "When the Bible speaks of the greatness of God," he says (evidently repeating what he has heard one of his officers say, for Roman soldiers are not as a rule acquainted with the Bible), "it says (Psalm cxlvii. 4): 'He telleth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names.' There is nothing very clever in that. I

know how many stars there are as well." "Tell me how many teeth you have," says the old man in reply. The soldier puts his hand into his mouth and commences to count them. "You know not," then says the old man, "what you have in your mouth, and yet you pretend to know the number of the stars! A little meekness, my good friend, would not do you any harm. Do not the wise men say: 'He who sacrifices a whole offering shall be rewarded for a whole offering; he who offers a burnt-offering shall have the reward of a burnt-offering; but he who offers *humility* unto God and man shall be rewarded with a reward as if he had offered all the sacrifices in the world'?"

"*Aleph and Aleph.*"

Two quieter guests, who are playing backgammon in a corner, offer us seats next to them. "You are making a lot of noise, comrade," the rowdy soldier says to one of them. "I am like the fruit trees," he replies. "They were once asked: 'Why do you not rustle?' 'Why should we make a noise?' they said; 'we do not need to attract attention. Every one knows us for our fruit.' You, however, are like the forest trees. When they were asked: 'Why do you rustle so much?' they replied: 'If we did not make a noise, we should not be noticed at all.'" The soldier takes his rebuke calmly. But the noise of the small, dirty room grows louder every minute. We can see how this tyrannical King has divided even the lowest classes into people who follow Herod and those who love freedom. "How are Aleph and Aleph?" asks one (meaning Alexander and Aristobulus). "Head of a dog," his neighbour replies, "silence is the best spice. Does not one of our Rabbis say, 'All my days I have lived among the wise, and I have found nought of better service than silence; not learning but doing is the chief thing; and whoso is profuse in his words causes sin'? Moreover, 'if silence be good for wise men,' runs the saying, 'how much better must it be for fools'—like yourself, for instance." "I do not know why you should be angry with me," replies the first. "Whatever I say seems to upset you, as the saying runs: 'When the pitcher falls upon the stone, woe unto the pitcher; when the stone falls upon the pitcher, woe unto the pitcher: whatever befalls, woe unto the pitcher.'"

"Dust in Job's mouth."

"Who was the fellow in the upper market, you vinegar son of wine?" (bad child of a good father), asks another. "Teach thy tongue to say 'I do not know,'" says one. "Dust in Job's mouth" (meaning "Hold your tongue") is the reply which a tanner gives in a haughty tone. "What!" (and he abuses the tanner), "wouldst thou silence me?" he answers. "Be careful what thou sayest of me," says the tanner, "for thou rememberest the saying: 'Slander is like an arrow—it kills at a distance. It can be uttered here in Jerusalem, and have its harmful effect in Rome.' Moreover, the Rabbis say: 'To slander is to murder.' But call names as thou likest; a myrtle is a myrtle, even when it grows among weeds." They do not venture to speak freely of current events, for walls have ears. "Thy friend has a friend, and thy friend's friend has a friend, so be discreet," the saying runs. And when a follower of Herod sneezes like a crocodile, the whole company cries: *Assoosa*, *Assoosa*, ("Bless you, bless you!").

Clever repartee.

One of the noisy party in the overcrowded room intimates somewhat rudely to his neighbour that his room is preferable to his company. "The dog sticks to you on account of the crumbs in your pocket," he tells him in the words of one of the Rabbis. "When the thief has no opportunity for stealing, he considers himself an honest man," is the retort. "If your friends agree in calling you an ass," replies the first, "go and put a saddle on your back." "To change the subject," the one says, "I have been unlucky lately—do you know of any work I can profitably do?" His comrade replies: "You son of a fig-dealer! sell your father's figs" (seize opportunities when they present themselves). And so they continue, choosing, even in their repartee, the clever sayings of the Rabbis. Soon afterwards we observe the same two men talking quietly to each other. They have been given a jug of cider between them by another man, and we are reminded of the proverb that "the cat and the rat make peace over a carcase."

The coopers receive justice.

A cooper complains that he has received scanty justice in a suit against another man, and asserts that the Jewish Law is at fault in many respects. The old man in the corner disagrees, and tells the cooper a story relating to some men of his own trade, to illustrate the impartial

justice of the law. Some coopers once let the wine run out of a cask belonging to a Rabbi, and he took their coats in order to repay himself for the loss of the wine. They brought the matter before one of the members of the Beth Din. "Give them back their coats," was the judgment. "Is that what you call dealing out justice?" asked the Rabbi. "Yes," was the reply; "walk in the way of good men, as Solomon commands." The Rabbi then returned the coats. But the coopers were still not satisfied, and said: "We are poor people, and have worked all day long, and are hungry, and have nothing." Then the judge said: "Come, give them their wages." "Is that dealing justice?" asked the Rabbi again. "Yes," was the reply, "for Solomon continues: 'Keep the path of righteousness.'" Having received this excellent advice, we take our departure. As we leave, we thank our host for his attention. "Do not thank me," he replies, "for I am not the owner of this place: thank God, the Owner of Heaven and earth."

CHAPTER XII

A DAY IN JERUSALEM (*continued*)

Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes

A heated argument.

But who are those two men having such a heated discussion over the way? They seem to be nearly coming to blows over their arguments. Let us step over and hear what they have to say. We soon discover they are members of the two great parties in the country—the Pharisees and Sadducees, for in these times, when the oppression of the Romans has become so severe, the differences between the Pharisees and Sadducees are intensified. The Pharisee is the first to speak:

The Pharisee objects to Roman rule.

"How long are we to remain under the cruel rule of these Roman tyrants, who oppress us, and who will try and prevent us practising our faith if they can? Other nations have guardian angels watching over them; but we Jews have God Himself watching over our interests. May the God of Israel, then, soon bring about the time when the wickedness and cruelty of Roman rule shall be replaced by peace and goodness in our own land, when we shall govern ourselves. Then will those who have gone to their rest rise again to share in the glories to come, and a descendant of King David—the מָשִׁיחַ (Messiah or anointed one)—will help us to restore the fallen fortunes of the House of Israel."

The Sadducee is satisfied.

The Sadducee replies: "Why do you object so much to Roman rule? I am quite happy. Of course I look at things from a different point of view from yourself, because I happen to belong to the great family of the High Priests. The Romans don't interfere with our religion. You may think me selfish, but if Judea were once again independent, my position could not be much better than it is now, and it might be much worse. I am quite willing to do what I can to help my Roman masters and friends—besides, who

are you, one of the common people, to argue the matter with me?"

The Pharisee: "I may be one of the common people, but let me remind you that it is not necessary to be a High Priest in order to be a good Israelite. 'Ye shall be a kingdom of priests,' say the Scriptures. Every Jew is a priest by birth, and can be as holy as you and your friends, who perform sacred rites in the Temple. Besides, suppose your great-grandfather was a more important person than mine, we have only to go back far enough to reach our common ancestor, Abraham." *"A kingdom of priests."*

The Sadducee: "In any case I would rather be the tail of the lions than the head of the foxes; but it is quite clear, with your new-fangled ideas about every Jew being a priest, and people being allowed to worship in places other than the Temple, that you are bringing the holy position of the High Priests and the sacred Temple into contempt. I will have nothing to do with your alterations of the Law; the Torah (by which I mean the five books of Moses) is quite good enough for me, and I mean to cling to it." *The Sadducee sticks to the Torah.*

The Pharisee: "But, my good friend, the Torah, about which you pretend to be so keen (I believe in my heart of hearts that you are much more zealous to serve your Roman masters), was made for man—man was not made for the Torah. Your cruel method of demanding the letter of the Law—'an eye for eye and a tooth for tooth'—does not seem to me to be carrying out the real spirit of the Biblical command. We are more merciful. We do not believe that the laws were intended to be obeyed without explanation, and so we possess regulations, which have been handed down to us from generation to generation. They may make the observance of the laws a little more irksome, but, at any rate, they make us understand them better, and they appear to us more reasonable to carry out." *The Torah made for man.*

The Sadducee: "Your laws are all very well, but, in my humble opinion, some of you lay too great stress on your wonderful learning and knowledge. If I may take a page from your own book, let me say that a man can be pious, even if he is not a scholar, and you need not despise ignorant people on this account." *Too great stress on knowledge.*

The Pharisee: "Your remark only applies to a very few of us. But, to go to another matter, I want to oppose,

once and for all, your method of regarding the Sabbath. In my opinion, the Sabbath is a day of cheerfulness and rejoicing, when people can rest and worship God in happiness and joy, whereas you want us to be miserable."

Cleaning the sun!

The Sadducee: "I disagree with you entirely. Your explanations and additions to the Law make you lose sight entirely of the original commands of the Almighty. Your never-ending rules about everything become intolerable. With your cleaning this and cleaning that, you will want to cleanse the sun next. Take, again, your Synagogues. What right have you to pray anywhere but in the Temple?"

The spirit of Hillel.

The Pharisee: "We follow the spirit of the great teacher Hillel in thinking that, if for some reason we cannot worship in the Temple, it is better that we should pray in a Synagogue than not at all, so long as we pray to God and pray to Him earnestly; better, too, that we should pray to the Almighty in our own homes than offer no prayers at all. In our opinion, one of the most important teachings of our faith is that one does not require to be rich or powerful to be a good religious Jew."

What's in a name?

The Sadducee: "Well, I do not believe you are as pious as you pretend to be. I, for one, shall always call a hypocrite a Pharisee. Moreover, I fail to see why you insist on being different from us, the older and more important section of the community. Why! even the word from which you derive your name, פָּרִישׁ, means 'to separate.'"

The Pharisee: "Not at all. We derive our name from the other meaning of פָּרִישׁ, which is to separate the different senses of a word, and thus explain or interpret it. For we are the interpreters of the Law. We desire, unlike you, to preserve our nationality, and so we separate ourselves from foreign peoples. This, too, is another explanation of our name. But, as for you, I am sure I do not know why you bear the name you do. You are certainly not a צַדִּיק (a righteous man), which some people say is the origin of the name Sadducee. And Zadok, the High Priest of the first Temple, who you say founded your party, was a much better man than you are ever likely to be."

Seven kinds of Pharisees.

The Sadducee: "In any case I can say this of my party—that we are not scoffed at as you are by the learned men. For they say there are seven different types of Pharisees. There is (1) the 'shoulder' Pharisee, who

bears, as it were, his good actions, in a boastful manner, upon his shoulder; (2) the 'wait a little' Pharisee, who always says, 'Wait a little until I have completed the *Mitzvah*' (good act) 'which I am about to perform'; (3) the 'bruised' Pharisee, who, in order to avoid doing wrong, runs against the wall, and so bruises himself; (4) the 'pestle' Pharisee, who walks head downwards, like the pestle in the mortar; (5) the 'profit and loss' Pharisee, who pretends to have done every possible good act, and inquires: 'Is there really something still to do?'; (6) the 'God-fearing' Pharisee, after the manner of Job; (7) the 'God-loving' Pharisee, after the manner of Abraham. Thus there are only two worthy classes of Pharisees (viz., the 6th and 7th), against five contemptible kinds."

The Pharisee: "There are black sheep in every fold, and it is unfair to blame a whole people because a few do not act aright."

We prefer the Pharisees.

We leave the two to continue their argument, with the feeling that, although the Pharisee's additions to the Law may be burdensome, yet we admire him for the efforts he has made to interpret the spirit of the Law, and to moderate some of its stringency. In view, too, of the Sadducees' intimate connection with Rome, we become suspicious of their zeal to obey the letter of the Law in all its purity.

A visit to the Essenes.

If we wish to know more about the Essenes, we must make an excursion outside the Holy City to the valley of the Jordan, where there is a small community. The Essenes have since been called Jewish "monks," but we do not find them in cloisters, or passing their time in total seclusion and meditation. They live in small communities right away from their fellow-men, and, as they believe that the end of the world is approaching, they therefore wish to prepare for the life to come by living a life of purity and prayer. There are no women amongst them, for they do not marry. They present a strange spectacle as they come to meet us, with aprons and shovels and hatchets (these we afterwards learn they have as a sign of purity—the apron to cleanse their hands, the shovel to cover impurities with earth, the hatchet to dig holes wherein to place refuse, whenever they find any). They are simply and plainly dressed, and, while some wear long, white, loose-fitting garments, others, with their flowing locks, are

clothed in a rough blanket of camel's hair, fastened round their limbs with girdles of skin.

Bathing in the river.

Soon after we arrive, we see them bathing in the river, for they attach great importance to the duty of personal cleanliness, and one of the first things they ask people to do in observing Judaism is to purify themselves with water. They thus follow Hillel's maxim: "As in a theatre or circus the statues of the King must be kept clean by him to whom they have been entrusted, so the bathing of the body is a duty of man, who was created in the image of the Almighty, King of the world." To them cleanliness seems to be not merely "next to Godliness," but Godliness itself. This is why they are so careful to keep their streets clean (to them, therefore, holy) by covering up refuse whenever they find it—contrary to the general practice in the East.

Communists.

As the Essenes are communists—sharing everything in common—we are not surprised to find that none of them has a house of his own. They have one storehouse, and they have their meals together. Even the clothes each of them wears belong to the whole community. It is the Sabbath. We find them all sitting in rows in the Synagogue according to their age, the younger ones listening with becoming attention at the feet of the elder ones who face them. We listen to what is being taught, and find that their main rule is three-fold—love of God, love of man, and self-control. To show their love of God, their teacher tells them they must live a life of purity and holiness, avoiding swearing and falsehood, and declaring that God causes only good and no evil whatsoever. To prove their love of virtue, they must not have any desire for money, or high position, or pleasure. They must cultivate temperance and endurance, simplicity and a mild temper. They must have no false pride, and they must be obedient to the Law. To show their love of man, they should be pleasant and kind to all alike.

Their occupations.

On inquiring what their occupations are, we find that some cultivate the soil, and others take part in crafts of various kinds. Unlike the monks of later times, they adopt the teaching of the Rabbis that work is a blessing, and that a father apprentices his son to robbery if he does not teach his son a trade. No youths are admitted to their

brotherhood, and they do not ask boys to vow to join them, but only accept adults who can think for themselves. Their wants are very few, and they tell us that, although they are different from all other men in the fact that they have no money, yet they consider themselves the richest of all because they have few wants and live quietly and simply. They have no slaves like so many of the people of the time—all of them are free, and each serves the others. Whatever they receive for their wages they do not keep as their own, but put into a common fund for the use of every one.

Influence of the Essenes.

The Essenes, we learn, live in small villages because they think towns are the corrupters of morals, and are too noisy and busy for a holy life and the easy carrying out of their principles. Like Elijah of old, they have left the twelve acres which they were to inherit, and have vowed bachelorhood and poverty, in order that they may devote their lives to elevate their nation's morals. As they try to stem the mad rush hither and thither, they seem like sailors doing their duty calmly in a burning ship during a storm. They are not mere idle beggars or praying saints, but, as they strive after the simple life, and set an example amid the evil influences of Herod's followers in Jerusalem, they seek to keep alive the mission and the high ideals of the Jewish faith. And yet we feel that these strange, simple Essenes are not achieving all they desire. Judaism teaches that religion must affect all the actions of life; not that one must separate oneself altogether from the life of one's fellows in order to live religiously. Whilst it is true that the Essenes are not living a life of total seclusion, we cannot help thinking that their complete withdrawal from ordinary intercourse with the nation as a whole is not life in the real sense, and therefore is not truly and fully religious. On the other hand, although their numbers are not large, they cannot be without some influence on their people; for, just as the schools of the prophets of Israel, few in number, preserved Israel's faith and kept before the people through the ages noble and elevated thoughts and hopes, so the Essenes, as we have seen, are holding up pure ideals amidst the corruption of the time.

CHAPTER XIII

A DAY IN JERUSALEM (*continued*)

A "BIKKURIM" PROCESSION

A "Bikkurim" procession.

IT is now nearly three in the afternoon. A crowd of people, mostly young men, comes from the direction of the North Gate of the Holy City, and another crowd hastens towards it. Those in the houses ask what is the matter. "It is a Bikkurim procession," say the others, "stopping before the North Gate." *Bikkurim* is the Hebrew name given to the first-fruits of the fields, which are sacred to God. "The first-fruits of thy land shalt thou bring unto the house of the Lord thy God," runs the Biblical command (Exod. xxiii. 19; Deut. xxvi. 2). They are brought to the Temple, and form one of the gifts which Israel presents to its priests as compensation for their not being allowed to possess land. The whole country is divided into twenty-four districts. At the appointed time those who are to bring the first-fruits to Jerusalem gather in the chief town of the district. They pass the night in the street so as to be ready in good time the next morning, when the summons of the captain of the district resounds: "Arise and let us go up to Zion, to the house of the Lord our God."

Seven kinds of fruit.

They have previously gone to their fields or orchards, and have looked around for fruits that have begun to ripen. These they dedicate as Bikkurim by tying round them a special kind of string. It is considered an especial act of piety to arrange the seven kinds of fruit that they collect in separate baskets, whilst he who brings the Bikkurim in one basket has to arrange them in a set order. Barley is placed at the bottom, and covered with a layer of leaves or branches to separate it from the wheat. This again is similarly covered to separate it from the olives, and they in their turn are kept apart from the fourth layer, which

consists of dates. Above the dates the pomegranates are placed, and these are covered by figs, which form the top layer. Clusters of grapes surround the figs and complete the seven kinds of fruit of which the offering consists. Those who came from a distance are permitted to bring dried figs and dates instead of fresh ones. The baskets in which the fruits are arranged vary with the wealth of the owner, the rich bringing their offering in baskets of gold and silver, the poor in plaited fruit-baskets of peeled poplar-twigs. The baskets of the rich are returned to them, but those of the poor are added to the Bikkurim as part of the gift to the priests, thus giving rise to the saying: "Poverty pursues the poor." To the sides of the baskets are attached doves, which are used for a burnt-offering. A bullock, which is the common thank-offering of them all, heads the procession. His horns are gilded, and on his head is placed a wreath of olive.

A welcome interruption.

One of these processions it is that has made a halt before the North Gate. Each stage of the journey has been begun with the words of Psalm cxxii.: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go to the house of the Lord," and it is the second verse of the Psalm ("Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem") which has brought the procession to a standstill. It has stopped so that news may be sent to the Temple of its arrival, and in order that the first-fruits may be properly arranged—the finest of them being placed in a ring round the rest. Those who had brought dried figs or raisins as Bikkurim now obtain fresh figs or grapes to hang around their baskets. Then the representatives of the Levites on duty, the priests and the treasurers of the sanctuary, come out to meet the procession. Already we can hear their joyous flute-playing in the distance. There could not be a more welcome interruption to the sad mood of Jerusalem to-day. The oppressed people feel that this, after all, is something which has to do with their own country and faith, and is far different from the plays and Greek music of the theatre, and the gladiators and wild beasts of the amphitheatre which Herod has presented to the city.

"My resting-place for ever."

As they pass through Jerusalem on their way to the Temple the labourers who are at work in the streets rise to greet them, saying: "Our brethren, men of such and such

place, welcome." We understand now the joy of the pilgrims as they enter the Holy City. For, to the Jew all over Palestine, Jerusalem is the longing of his heart, the centre of all that he cares for in life. We can, indeed, sympathise with the pilgrim as he greets the city of his longings with the words of the Psalmist: "For the Lord hath chosen Zion. He hath desired it for His habitation. This is my resting-place for ever: here will I dwell, for I have desired it" (Psalm cxxxii. 13, 14).

A long procession.

It is a long procession that winds into Jerusalem to the sound of the flutes. That is why the deputation from the Temple is so numerous. When they reach the Temple hill, every man sets his basket on his shoulder, and they enter the outer court of the Temple, repeating the words of Psalm cl.: "Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in His sanctuary; praise Him in the firmament of His power." As they arrive at the "Court of the Israelites," the Levites begin to sing Psalm xxx.: "I will extol Thee, O Lord: for Thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me." The doves that are carried with the baskets are received as burnt-offerings, and whatever other offering they have brought they give to the priests. As they do so they repeat the confession prescribed in Deut. xxvi. 3: "I profess this day unto the Lord my God, that I am come unto the country which the Lord sware unto our fathers for to give us."

"A very beautiful and admirable hymn."

And then they repeat what the great Jewish philosopher, Philo, has called "the very beautiful and admirable hymn prescribed for the occasion; and if he does not happen to remember it, he listens to it with all attention while the priest recites it." The hymn praises God for having delivered the Jewish people from their enemies and "not only leading them forth to freedom, but even giving them in addition a most fertile land; for it is from the fruits of this land, O bounteous God! that we now bring Thee the first-fruits; if indeed it is a proper expression to say that he who receives them from Thee brings them to Thee. For, O Master, they are all Thy favours and Thy gifts, of which Thou hast thought us worthy, and so enabled us to live comfortably and to rejoice in blessings which Thou hast given to us, who did not expect them." A great crowd of men, women, and children has followed the pro-

cession to the Temple, and presses round as the strangers come out again. Relatives and friends claim the right of entertaining the visitors, which they esteem a privilege, and those who have neither have hospitality pressed upon them by strangers, for "hospitality is the most important part of Divine worship." "Let thy house be wide open," said one of the Rabbis, "and let the poor be the children of thy house." And the Rabbis explain the verse of the Psalmist: "He shall stand at the right hand of the poor" (Psalm cix. 31) by saying that "whenever a poor man stands at the door, thou must imagine that God Himself stands at his right hand. If thou givest the poor alms, know that thou shalt receive a reward from Him that standeth at thy right hand."

"Home."

We visit one of the houses where the strangers are entertained. The host and his wife seem to be an affectionate couple, and the husband has evidently acted on the precept: "Love your wife like yourself; honour her more than yourself." "A man should always consult his wife, treating her as a companion and not as a plaything, making her what God intended—a help-meet for him." She is small in stature and an invalid, and her husband treats her with gentleness and consideration, acting on the injunction: "If thy wife is small, bend down to her and whisper in her ear." "I never call my wife 'Wife,'" he tells his guests, "but 'Home,' for she is the principal inmate of the household, which, without her, would not be Home." A pretty title, we think. "Every man gets the wife he deserves," says the proverb. Our good host has certainly obtained the wife he has merited. They did not marry very early in life, for the Rabbis teach: "First let a man build his house, and plant a vineyard, and then let him wed a wife." Nor did he marry for money, for "he who marries for money, his children shall be a curse to him."

A contented weaver.

The husband is a weaver. It is a poor trade, but the sages teach that people, however poor, should never despair or be discontented with their lot. "A weaver," says an old proverb, "who curses his life loses one of his years"—that is to say, he must be satisfied with his fate, unless he wishes to shorten his life by outbreaks of despair. "Even the weaver is King in his own house,"

and our host evidently agrees with the proverb. "There is no calling so mean," he says, "that a man cannot be proud of it." His wife honours her husband's calling as well as her husband, and is inclined to think herself just as important as if he had been a wealthy man. "Be the husband only as big as an ant," says a proverb, "yet the wife seats herself among the great." "Though the husband is but a field watch," runs another saying, "the wife is content, and asks for no lentils in her pot." A third proverb says: "Though the man be but a wool-comber, his wife calls him to the seat at the house-door, and sits down beside him."

A happy marriage.

A happy marriage, made at a suitable time, such as that of our friends the host and hostess, is regarded as the greatest joy in life, especially for a man who must live by the work of his hands. "Whosoever lives unmarried, lives without joy, without comfort, without blessing," say the Rabbis. "It is a woman alone through whom God's blessings are vouchsafed to a house. She teaches the children, speeds the husband to the place of worship and instruction, welcomes him when he returns, keeps the house godly and pure; and God's blessing rests upon all these acts." "If the wife is lazy," says a proverb, "the bread basket empties." But of the industrious wife it is said: "Even when she chatters, she still spins." One Rabbi asked how a woman could be the helpmate of her husband. "The man brings corn into the house; can he eat corn?" he asked. "He brings flax; can he wear flax?" "No," was the answer. "His wife (since she grinds the corn and spins the flax) makes his face to shine with happiness, and sets him on his feet." The following proverb seems to fit our hostess: "A modest woman is worthy of being the wife of a High Priest, for she is like an altar in her home."

Table manners.

We learn by close observation, and by one or two rebukes which the master of the house administers to his children, some interesting rules as to "table manners." Thus it is not considered polite to wipe a dish with bread and lay the bread on the table, for to do so might "displease our neighbour." One must not suck one's fingers, or yawn in company. A cup of wine must be taken in two draughts. For to drink it all at once is

rightly thought to be gluttonous, and to sip slowly is considered affected. It is not permitted to give anything to the child or servant of the host without his permission. "Tips" and presents in these days are apparently very closely limited. "A disciple of the wise who makes light of the washing of the hands before meals is contemptible," says the proverb. "More contemptible still is that guest who invites another guest, and he who begins to eat before a disciple of the wise. But that guest who troubles another guest is more to be despised than all these four together. Moreover, he who eats in the streets is like a dog." Guests are asked to be grateful for the hospitality shown to them. "Do not throw a stone," runs the saying, "into the spring at which you have drunk." "A polite guest," says another maxim, "acknowledges all that he has received, and says: 'What trouble my host has been put to, and all for my sake!' But an ill-mannered visitor remarks: 'Bah! what trouble has he taken? I have had scarcely anything to eat, and, after all, it was not done for me, but only for his wife and children.'"

Salt and water.

Salt seems to be plentifully used in the preparation of the meal, for the saying runs: "After all thy dishes eat salt, and after all thy beverages drink water, and thou wilt not come to harm." Moreover, "a meal without salt does not deserve the name." Soup forms one of the courses, for "a meal without broth is no meal." One rule the guests have not observed, as we have seen: "People should not talk during meals, lest the food go the wrong way, which is dangerous." Expensive food is not provided, for the hosts remember the saying of the Rabbis: "Eat less and drink less, and add to the house-rent. He that dines upon sheep's tail" (a special and expensive dish) "must hide himself from his creditors; but he that dines upon lettuce has no fear of being seen anywhere."

Conversation at table.

While the guests sit at supper in the houses of their hosts, or as they rest on the cushions with their sleeves turned up (for that is a sign that they have accepted the invitation given to them), there is one constant question: "Have you no news of the sons of Mariamne?" Then they discuss where Alexander and Aristobulus are, and the question is asked: "Tell us, ye men of Jerusalem, what

the King means to do with them." "He will kill them," says the host, "and then build two towers in their honour." "He never loved them," says the hostess, "for he hates every one who is better than himself. I have sometimes seen him walking with the two princes. They were almost a head taller than he. But how they stooped in order not to seem so!" "Do not speculate on what is going to happen," says one of the guests, "for we are taught, 'Thy yesterday is thy past; thy to-day is thy future; but thy to-morrow is a secret.'"

Who is wise? A Rabbi, who has been invited to the meal, thinks, since he is a scholar of Hillel, who stands so high in Herod's favour, that he must take the King's side, and quotes the proverb: "To rebel against the King is to rebel against the King of Kings." "Fie," cry the others; "if you have taken up God's trade, put on His livery also!" (that is to say, "be charitable"). "I will ask you four questions," says the Rabbi, wishing to change the subject. "Who is wise? He who learns from all men (after Psalm cxix. 99—'From all my teachers I have gotten understanding'). Who is mighty? He who overcomes his passions (after Prov. xvi. 32—'He that is slow to anger is better than a mighty man, and he that ruleth over his spirit than he that taketh a city'). Who is rich? He that is content with his lot (after Psalm cxxviii. 2—'When thou eatest the labour of thine hands happy art thou, and it shall be well with thee'). Who is honoured? He who honours other men (after 1 Sam. ii. 30—'For them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be held in contempt')." "Thou hast dived into deep waters, and brought up a piece of broken potsherd," says one of the guests (meaning an elaborate argument leading to a flimsy conclusion). "But I will answer your first question," he continues, "in the words of one of the sages: 'That man has real wisdom who is able to judge liberally, to think freely, and to love his neighbour.'" Another guest answers the same question in the words of another Rabbi: "The greatest wisdom is to know thyself."

Sad news. Then, when the host has taken down the flag which is always displayed at the door on the occasion of feasts, and the removal of which means that no one must now enter,

they tell of the tortures and executions which are taking place. At last one countryman cries: "How glad I shall be to get out of the Holy City again, now that it has become a den of murderers." And, when he gets home, what sad news awaits him! Alexander and Aristobulus have been strangled, Jerusalem has been so stained with blood that the task of cleaning the streets was a ghastly one. The King accused the officers of his army of high treason before all the people in the theatre. The mob of Jerusalem became like a wild beast when its vengeance was let loose against the officers, most of whom it hated, and three hundred were killed with clubs and stones. We are not surprised to learn, therefore, that here and there in the stillness of a chamber, in the corner of a Synagogue, or the darkness of a vault, prayer was offered up that the Messiah might soon come and put an end to this bloody tyranny, this worldly revel and riot.

CHAPTER XIV

4 B.C.–28 C.E.

ROMAN OPPRESSION

The "circle" complete.

HEROD'S death was followed by bitter quarrels between his sons, which provided an excuse for Rome to increase her hold over Judea. And so it came about that, in the reign of the Emperor Augustus, a Roman Governor was appointed to rule over the country; thus the last remnant of independence was lost. We have seen how the alliance between Simon the Prince and the Romans served as a pretext for interference during a quarrel between the grandsons of John Hyrcanus; how Antipater the Idumean had been appointed Governor of the kingdom, and later his son, Herod the Great, was made King. But now the "circle in the sand" was almost complete, for a Roman was Governor of the land, and Judea became a Roman Province—part of the Roman Empire.

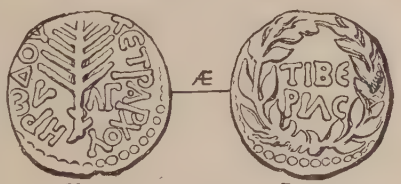
In Galilee.

The greed of the Roman Governor was now making the people more and more restive. But nowhere was the imposition of heavy taxes and other hardships felt more deeply than in the little hamlets and villages on the hill-tops of the province of Galilee in the north of Palestine, where Herod had ruled at the outset of his public career. It was the craggy sides of one of the romantic dells of Galilee that gave refuge to a band whom the exactions of Herod on behalf of Rome had impoverished and driven into becoming rebels and robbers, but who did not, like Herod, rob the poor equally with the rich. Herod wiped out this band by letting down his soldiers in baskets over the cliff-side and kindling fires at the entrance of the caverns. They may have been robbers, but they numbered among them a fine old man, who, like Hannah, the mother of the brave boys who defied Antio-

chus, stood at the mouth of the cave, and, as the suffocating smoke rolled in, rather than submit to Herod slew one by one his sons and their mother, and then flung himself over the precipice.

The "homes of freedom."

"The mountains are the homes of freedom," sings a German poet, and, just as the sturdy mountaineer, living on the Swiss Alps, learns to love his "liberty" in his mountain hut amid the snow, so did the poor, hardy Galilean peasant on the hillside, surrounded by his vines and fig-trees. Many a time did these sturdy sons of the Galilean hills tear themselves away from their families, and dash themselves against the invincible power of Rome. Galilean women dreamt that they would be the mother of the Messiah, for the prophets had foretold that he would come in troublous times, such as those through which they were passing. Bands of robbers ravaged the country, and everything seemed as bad and gloomy as it could possibly be. On the other hand, they knew that Judaism was gaining in power all over the world; even kings and queens were to be numbered among the converts. There was great rejoicing in Jerusalem when Helena, the queen of Adiabene (in Mesopotamia) came to offer sacrifices in the Temple. There was a prophecy that the ruler of the world was to come from the East, and the Jews believed that this prediction of Isaiah was now to be realised, and that they would conquer the mighty empire of Rome. We can, therefore, quite understand that some of the people, poor and ignorant as they were, believed that Israel's hour of freedom was near at hand, that the dark night through which they were passing was but the prelude to a bright dawn, that the coming Messiah would release them from all their troubles.



Obverse *Reverse*

A COIN OF HEROD ANTIPAS, SON OF HEROD

Obverse:—Greek words meaning "Tetrarchy of Herod," and a palm branch. *Reverse*:—Greek for "Tiberias" in two lines, enclosed within a wreath.

Rome watchful.

But Rome was ever watchful, and the least attempt at rebellion was severely and cruelly punished. Any outward

sign of unrest on the part of the people, who were strung to a high pitch of expectation and excitement, was met by sentence of death, which took the form of nailing those convicted on to a wooden cross, and allowing them, in terrible pain and suffering, slowly to die. Accordingly, we are not surprised to find that a large number of the people banded themselves together under the name of "Zealots," with the aim of forming a republic and driving out the Romans. A man named Judas, of Galilee, led a party of these Zealots in revolt against the Roman Governor, but they were soon crushed, and Judas was killed.

Pontius Pilate.

The Roman Governor of the time was a man called Pontius Pilate. He was a Spaniard, and, though he did not act as harshly as some of his successors, his chief aim seems to have been that of many Roman Governors in other countries under the rule of Rome—to deprive the people over whom he ruled of their liberties. In this he was following the trend of Roman policy at that time. He therefore endeavoured to remove from the Jews the remainder of their freedom, and with this end in view he tried to provoke a rebellion amongst them, which would give him an excuse for crushing them altogether. He levied very heavy taxes, part of which went to Rome, and part to himself. Thinking that he would by this means please the Emperor, and so obtain honour for himself, he decided to do everything he could to offend the religion of the Jews. Previous Roman Governors had given orders to the soldiers to remove all idolatrous images from their flags before they entered the Holy City of Jerusalem. Pilate changed this custom, and gave orders for the images to be restored.

A deputation to Pilate.

The nation was, naturally, very troubled at this, and a huge deputation of 10,000 men was despatched to Cæsarea, where Pilate had his palace, to plead with him for the removal of the images. Pilate refused, however, to see the deputation, and ordered them to return home. They replied, with a stubborn persistence on which Pilate had not counted, that they would not leave Cæsarea until he had seen them and heard what they had to say. Pilate then gave directions to his soldiers to surround the deputation, and kill every one of them, and he warned the

leaders that this order would be carried out if they did not leave the palace. To this they replied that they were there representing the Jewish people and their religion, and that they would not be turned away by threats. Moreover, they were quite willing to perish for their faith, and, laying down their weapons, and folding their arms, they awaited the Roman soldiers. The latter were surprised at this unaccustomed bravery. Refusing to attack the defenceless crowd, they joined the Jews in petitioning Pilate to relent. He was, therefore, forced to yield.

Pilate's new schemes.

But Pilate, defeated on this occasion, was even more desirous than ever of obtaining the greatest amount of money from the Jewish people for his Roman master and himself, even if this forced them into rebellion against Rome. Although he knew that the Jews had paid all the taxes they could bear, he decided to levy a new tax, the collection of which was accompanied by much cruelty. Finding, however, that this did not achieve his purpose, he now decided to despoil the Temple and rob the holy sanctuary of its treasure.

Caiaphas the High Priest.

The High Priest of the time was named Caiaphas. He seems to have been much more anxious to please the Roman Governor than act in the interests of his people and religion, and, like Menelaus in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, he possessed an altogether mean and contemptible character. Under the pretext of providing Pilate with money to build an aqueduct (or water-way) for bringing water to Jerusalem, Caiaphas handed over to him the Temple treasury. In vain did the Jews protest that Caiaphas was not entitled to hand over their property without their consent. They were now, indeed, outraged, for the Temple had been robbed of its valuable treasure, and they felt this blow to their national pride more bitterly than anything. The men of Judea could suffer persecution and oppression in silence. But, when their holy Temple was, as they thought, desecrated by the removal of its holy contents, which they knew would find their way into Pilate's chest, they could bear it no longer, and were determined to attack Pilate and endeavour to break his tyrannical rule.

Twenty thousand Jews massacred.

Pilate, hearing of this proposed attack, is said to have ordered ten legions of soldiers to disguise themselves as

ordinary citizens, and mingle with the people who were demonstrating against Caiaphas. They then fell upon the defenceless Jews, and butchered twenty thousand of them. The people, whose power of endurance was becoming exhausted, though their spirit was not broken, then proposed that they should send an embassy to Rome to complain to the Emperor Tiberius about Pilate. The Governor was afraid lest the Emperor should be angry with him, and he resolved to yield to the demands of the people and offered to hear their complaints. But peace and quiet was only brought about for a short time, and soon the oppression and persecution were renewed once more.

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CHAPTER XV

JESUS OF NAZARETH

The early days of Jesus.

In the troublous times which we have just been describing, a few years before the year we now call 1, was born Jesus (which is the Greek form of Joshua, his Hebrew name), the eldest son of a poor Jewish carpenter named Joseph and his wife Mary. His birthplace was Nazareth, a little village in the Province of Galilee, and it was here that he learned to read and write, and acquired something of the teaching of the great Rabbis of the time. The Bible must have made a great impression on him. In view of the general feeling at this time that the Messiah was about to come and that a new age was about to dawn, he must have been especially fascinated by what Isaiah and other prophets foretold of the advent of "the anointed"; and the brilliant dreams they dreamt of a golden future, their eloquence, the beautiful thoughts they expressed in beautiful language, must have entered deeply into his soul. The mountain villagers were, as a rule, rough in speech and manner, but Jesus developed gentleness of character and eloquence of speech. Believing that he had a "message" to give to his people, he commenced preaching (just like many other teachers of his time), at first in the little villages near his own home, but afterwards in other parts of his native province of Galilee. He followed such men as the great Rabbi Hillel in opposing hypocrisy and in teaching the religion of "doing good rather than offering sacrifices."

His teaching.

Like all the Rabbis, he would illustrate his teaching by telling the simple people among whom he worked parables or stories from which morals could be drawn. In order to appeal to the common people he put much of his teaching into forcible, emphatic language; but, apart from this element of exaggeration, without which he might not have succeeded in inducing people to listen to him, most of the

teaching of Jesus was *Jewish* teaching. It is true that he did not lay stress on all the details of the Law (although he kept the Jewish observances himself), but he would choose the noblest and most beautiful of the lessons taught by Judaism, and, clothing them in eloquent, picturesque language, teach them to the people. "Love thy neighbour as thyself" was one of his lessons, but it was the lesson of Judaism (for it was taken from the Book of Leviticus xix. 18), and was another form of the "golden rule" of Hillel. The reputation of Jesus as a preacher soon spread, and his work among the poor (which was just like that done by good people to-day), here healing a sick man, there assisting a poverty-stricken family, at another time endeavouring to reclaim a bad woman, increased his fame, and soon people began to announce that he was the Messiah for whom they had long been waiting during the time of oppression through which they had been passing.

Obverse *Reverse*

A COIN DATED 12 C.E.

Obverse:—Head of Roman Emperor Augustus. *Reverse*:—Figure of a Roman Temple.

Pilate suspicious.

It was not long before the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate, became suspicious of the influence of Jesus over the people in Galilee, especially as he had been announced as the Messiah. He seems to have been prompted in this by Caiaphas, the wicked High Priest of the time, who cared more about serving his Roman master than about the Temple and his religion. We do not know all, or anything like all, the history of the time, and many of the accounts which have come down to us were put into writing long after the events took place. It seems clear, however, that Caiaphas (to whose rapacious, unpatriotic conduct Jesus was naturally opposed) arranged to capture Jesus, made him go through a mock trial (quite against all Jewish custom and law) on a trumped-up charge, and induced Pilate to condemn him to death.

Jesus crucified.

He was crucified (this was the Roman method of execution) like so many others at the time who were found guilty by the Roman Governor, and, unimportant though his crucifixion may have seemed at the time when it

occurred, his life, and his death at the hands of the tyrant Roman Governor and the wicked High Priest have become the central point in the Christian religion, which, in one form or another, is practised by the majority of people in Europe and America to-day. Many years after his death various accounts of his life and teachings were put together in the form we know as the New Testament. Although Jesus himself had directed all his efforts to promoting Judaism within the Jewish community in Palestine, his followers founded the new religion we now call Christianity, and endeavoured to spread its doctrines among the Romans and other pagan nations.

CHAPTER XVI

28–70 C.E.

PHILO AND JOSEPHUS

The Jews in Egypt.

ROMAN rule and Roman oppression in Judea had driven out a large number of its inhabitants to seek their fortunes in other lands. Many of these joined the large colony of Jews in Egypt, and a considerable number settled in the city of Alexandria, its capital. Here the Jewish merchants had become prosperous; and they possessed many large and magnificent Synagogues. "He who has not seen the double gallery of the Great Synagogue in Alexandria in Egypt," says the Talmud, "has not seen one of the glories of Israel. It is said to have accommodated twice the number of those whom Moses led up out of Egypt. There were seventy-one chairs arranged for the seventy-one members of the local Sanhedrin. Each chair was said to be worth many talents of gold. A platform was in the middle, and upon this stood an official, who waved a flag as a signal for the people to respond 'Amen' to the prayers read by the reader, for he could not possibly be heard in so large a building by so many people. The people sat according to their trades—goldsmiths, silversmiths, blacksmiths, embroiderers, and weavers. When a stranger entered the Synagogue, he recognised his fellow-craftsmen at once, and, applying for work, was sure to obtain it." A Temple, too, had been built long ago in one of the Egyptian towns by Onias, son of the High Priest Onias, who had been murdered in the time of Mattathias, the father of Judas Maccabeus. Many of the Greek customs had been adopted, and the Jews in Alexandria cultivated Greek science and philosophy, which was much in vogue at the time.

The Septuagint.

A large number began to forget the Hebrew tongue, and, as they desired still to read the Bible, a Greek translation

was made. A legend tells us that the King of Egypt, Ptolemy Philadelphus, sent for seventy-two wise men in order that the translation might be made. He placed them in separate cells, and when they had each completed the translation it was found that all the versions were identical. The translation was thus called "the Septuagint," from the Latin word meaning "seventy." It was probably, however, issued under the authority of the seventy elders of Alexandria; it sometimes follows a different form from the modern version, and has some omissions from and additions to the original text.

Philo.

The most famous of the Jews of Alexandria was Philo (Philo-Judaeus, or Philo the Jew, as he was called), the great philosopher, who was born about the year 20 B.C. He belonged to one of the most distinguished and wealthy families in Alexandria. But he had no desire for worldly pleasures. So long as he could devote himself to his writings and his philosophy he was happy. His wife followed the example of his simple life, and, when asked by some of her friends why she, who was so rich, should disdain to wear gold ornaments, answered: "The virtue of my husband is adornment enough for his wife." Philo tried to include in his interpretation of Judaism some of the ideas which he had gathered from studying the Greek writers. Plato, the famous Greek philosopher, who lived three hundred years before, was the writer whom he held in highest esteem, and so similar were the minds of the two men, that it was said that "Philo either imitates Plato, or Plato imitates Philo." Philo wrote a large number of philosophical works, but he was disturbed in his studies by a crisis which occurred in the history of his people.

Philo's works.

He spent most of his life, however, in writing a great many books, and some of them read as if they might have been sermons delivered in the Synagogue of Alexandria. Thus he wrote works discussing the creation of the world, the stories of Cain and Abel, Noah, Moses, and other characters mentioned in the Pentateuch. "They tell an old story," he says in one of these books, "of some man in ancient times, who had fallen madly in love with the beauty of wisdom, as if it had been the beauty of a most lovely woman, and once, when he prepared a most sumptuous banquet of unbounded and costly magnificence, he looked

towards some of his friends, and said: 'Behold, O companions, how many things there are of which I have no need!' And yet he had nothing whatever of even necessary things beyond his mere clothes, and he was not puffed up with the magnitude of his riches, which has been the case with numbers of people; so that, on this account, he spoke against pomp and show. We are taught that we should call those people wise who are not eager to be rich in worldly things, but who despise these things as compared with the friendship of God, whom they look upon as the only true wealth, and the boundary of most perfect happiness. Never, then, let those men boast who have acquired power and sovereignty, as some men do, because they have subdued one city, or country, or nation; and others because they have acquired dominion over all the countries of the earth, to its farthest borders, and over all Grecian and barbarous nations, and over all the rivers and seas, infinite both in number and magnitude. For if, besides these things, they had made themselves masters of the whole world of nature, they would still be looked upon as but insignificant individuals in comparison with the great Kings who have received God for their inheritance."

Explanations of the Bible Laws.

Philo also wrote a philosophical commentary on the book of Genesis and a complete exposition of the whole Pentateuch, bringing out the moral and spiritual ideas that are contained in the laws of Moses. He explains, for instance, that the Jews were forbidden to eat pork, not so much because pork was unhealthy, but, because it was the most delightful of all meats, in order that they might practise self-denial in all things. Or again he explains that the prohibition of lighting the fire on the Sabbath was made on the ground that fire is the instrument of all work, and the kindling of it is therefore not fitting on the day of rest. Two of his works, "Against Flaccus" (Viceroy of Alexandria) and "On the virtues and office of Ambassadors," gave an account of some of the persecution of the Jews by the Romans at the time in which he lived.

Philo at Rome.

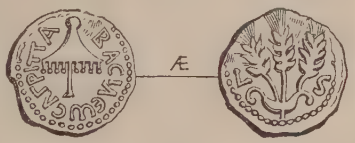
It was natural that when, in the year 40 C.E., the Jews of Alexandria were in danger of losing their rights, they should appoint Philo, whose influence was so great, and whose noble character was so much esteemed, to proceed to Rome and lay their case before the Emperor Caligula.

[*Photo*, MANSELL & Co.

CALIGULA

(From a bust in the British Museum)

The Emperor had issued a command that his statue should be erected in the Synagogues, and that he should be worshipped as a god. Caligula was laying out some new gardens in the grounds of his palace, where he received the embassy. For some time he took no notice of them, but suddenly he turned round to them, and remarked: "Why don't you eat pork, you fools?" and then went on talking to his builders. He repeated this question several times, but finally he said to Philo: "So you are the despisers of God, who will not recognise me as your deity, but who prefer to worship a nameless One, whilst all my other subjects have accepted me as their god." The envoys declared that they had already offered up three successive offerings in honour of Caligula. "That may be," answered the Emperor, "but the offerings were given *for* me, and not *to* me. For such I do not care. And how is it you do not eat pigs' flesh, and upon what grounds do you hold your right of equality with the Alexandrians?" Without waiting for a reply, the Emperor turned on his heel and went on talking to the builders. But Caligula was shortly afterwards murdered by some noble whom he had insulted, and his successor, Claudius, was more favourable to the Jews. Philo died about the year 60 C.E.



Obverse *Reverse*

A COIN OF HEROD AGRIPPA I.

Obverse:—Greek words meaning "King Agrippa," and an umbrella. *Reverse*:—Three ears of corn springing from one stalk.

We must now turn our attention again to what was happening in Judea. For, whilst the deputation from Alexandria were vainly seeking the favour of the Emperor, they were overwhelmed with the sad news which confirmed their impression that Caligula was mad, and that the time of Antiochus Epiphanes was returning. A decree had been issued that the Temple was to be desecrated by the erection of the statue of the Emperor. Fortunately Herod Agrippa, the grandson of Herod the Great, who was now ruler over Judea by the favour of Rome, had much influence with the Roman Emperor. When Caligula asked him on one occasion what favour he desired, Agrippa demanded

Herod Agrippa.

the repeal of the decree; and the Roman Emperor granted his request. During Agrippa's short reign there was peace and order again in the land, and for the last time Judea enjoyed a short span of undisturbed happiness.

The Jews rebel.

But Agrippa died after a short reign, and the Roman Governors renewed their oppression and extortion. The Zealots, who were anxious once more to pit themselves against the Romans, commenced a rebellion (in the year 66 C.E.), and appointed as the two principal leaders of the Judean forces John ben Levi, a native of Gischala (a town in Galilee), who was a Zealot, and Joseph (afterwards known as Josephus), the famous historian. The whole of Palestine was at this time divided by the Sanhedrin into three parts, each part being placed under a general. John and Josephus were two of these.

Obverse *Reverse*

ANOTHER COIN OF AGRIPPA I.

Obverse:—Greek words meaning "King Agrippa the Great, friend of Cæsar," and the head of Agrippa with diadem. *Reverse*:—Female figure, standing, holding rudder and cornucopiæ.

Josephus.

Josephus was a native of Jerusalem, and belonged to one of the priestly families. He had received instruction in the Law at his father's house when a boy; afterwards he became an Essene; and then, when twenty-six, he went to Rome. There he was treated well, and his stay in Rome made such a great impression on him that he became completely changed. How small and insignificant now, when he had returned home, seemed his own people in comparison with this mighty empire! What a contrast there was between Rome and Jerusalem! He had left behind a city of magnificence and grandeur, of joy and luxury, to return to a city of simplicity, quiet virtue, and devotion to God. He learned, when he arrived at Jerusalem, that preparations were being made for a revolt against Rome. He had seen how mighty was the power of the Romans, and so he did what he could at first to dissuade the Zealots from their intentions to rebel against them. He forgot that the noble, powerful spirit of patriotism and the love of their religion in the hearts of the enthusiastic Jewish youth were much more powerful than

the Roman armies. He forgot that Judas Maccabeus, with a small army of three thousand men, had defeated the mighty armies of Antiochus Epiphanes. He saw, however, that it was useless to attempt to dissuade the Zealots from their purpose, and finally he threw in his lot with them and won their confidence. Being made Governor of the province of Galilee, he raised an army of 100,000 men, and fortified many of the towns.

A quarrel between John and Josephus.

Josephus soon quarrelled with John of Gischala, who doubted his zeal in attacking the Romans. The people of Galilee were then divided into two parties, those who supported Josephus, and those who opposed him. John of Gischala complained to the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem, asking them to remove Josephus from his post. The Sanhedrin decreed that Josephus should give up his position as Governor of Galilee, and envoys were sent to bring him to Jerusalem. Josephus stated, however, that he was busy making preparations to fight against the Romans, and he caused the envoys to be killed. The quarrel had the effect of causing the people to be unprepared for the attack of the Romans when it finally came.

The Romans attack Judea.

The Roman general, Vespasian, arrived in March, 67, with an army of 50,000 men, and, step by step, the Jews under Josephus were driven back. They were led by a man who, throughout the struggle, had desired to make peace with the Romans, and their enthusiasm naturally died under his command. The Galileans were simple, industrious, and courageous people—not very learned, but inspired by their religion and love of their country. If they had had a different leader, it is possible that they might have overpowered the Romans. The other army under John seems to have held out more stubbornly. One city (that of Jotapata) was besieged for forty days, and 40,000 men lost their lives in the course of the siege. Josephus was within the walls of the city during the siege, and, knowing that resistance was hopeless, he tried (without effect) to induce the Jews to abandon the city. He then hid himself in a huge cistern with forty of his soldiers. They were discovered, and Josephus was called upon to surrender. Nothing would have pleased him better than to do this. But his companions, pointing their swords against his breast, swore that, sooner than allow him to

dishonour the Jews by his cowardice, they would take his life. He consented to their proposal that they should all die then and there. Each soldier swore that he would fall by the hand of one of his companions, and each in turn died heroically in this way. But Josephus, thinking, no doubt sincerely, that it was folly to throw away his life in this way, broke his word to the dead as he had done to the living. He and one comrade being the only survivors, he succeeded in disarming his companion, and delivered himself into the hands of the Romans. Vespasian treated him kindly, and, although he was a prisoner, he was allowed to wear a robe of honour; he was granted the privilege of Roman citizenship, and was given a pension. As a mark of honour to Vespasian, Josephus assumed the Emperor's name, Flavius, and has since been known as Flavius Josephus.

A coin issued under the Roman Emperor Caius, with the Greek words: "Name, King Agrippa"; the figure of the Emperor holding a sceptre in a four-horsed chariot.

Josephus's character.

It is always difficult to sum up a man's character quite fairly, and it may be that the accusations that have been levelled against Josephus, of want of patriotism and even treachery, are to some extent undeserved. His anticipation that the Romans would be victorious in the end proved correct, and it is possible that his advice that it was better to make terms with the enemy than lose everything was sound. He had, however, lost much of his Jewish sympathies during his stay in Rome, and this must have affected his judgment and his inclinations.

His histories.

Be this as it may, we can at all events recall his memory with gratitude for the historical works he afterwards wrote in Rome. They were written in Greek (the language used by the educated Romans of the time), and two of them are specially noteworthy, inasmuch as they give us almost the only information we have about some of the events he describes. One is entitled "Antiquities of the Jews," being a history of the Jewish people from the earliest times to the commencement of the struggle against Rome, which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem. The other

work is "The Jewish War," and is a history of the Jews from the time of Judas Maccabeus to the death of Herod. Both these works were intended to show the Jewish people in a favourable light to the Greek and Roman public for whom they were written. Many untruths had been spread among the Romans and other peoples about the Jews, and Josephus says in his Preface to "The Jewish War": "I thought it therefore monstrous to see the truth falsified in affairs of such great consequence, and to suffer those Greeks and Romans that took no part in the war to be ignorant of these things, and to read either flatteries or fictions. . . . And yet these writers have the confidence to call their accounts histories, though they seem to me to fail of their own purpose, in addition to their relating nothing that is sound. For they wished to demonstrate the greatness of the Romans, while they still diminish and lessen the action of the Jews; but I do not see how *they* can appear to be great who have only conquered those that were little. Nor are they ashamed to overlook the length of the war, the numbers of the Roman forces which so greatly suffered in it, and the greatness of the commanders, whose many struggles to take Jerusalem will be deemed inglorious, if what they achieved be reckoned but a small matter."

Josephus's services to his people.

Josephus must have repented of his lack of patriotism when he wrote these words, and we may perhaps partly forgive him, if indeed he *was* disloyal to his country, when we remember his services to his race in presenting their history in a favourable light to the peoples of the world. At the end of the "Antiquities," Josephus gives an account of his own life. In another book, "Against Apion," Josephus writes a spirited defence of the Jewish people in answer to a Roman who had scoffed at them and their history. After a long comparison between the Jews and other nations, Josephus remarks with indignation: "What then can we say of Apion, but that he examined none of these things, while he uttered incredible words about them? But it is a great shame for a critic not to be able to write true history."

An eloquent passage.

A good deal of Josephus's description of Judaism would hold to-day, as the following example will show: "What are the things then that we are commanded or forbidden?

They are simple and well known. The first command is concerning God, and says that God is almighty and perfect, the beginning, the middle, and the end of all things. He is manifest in His works and benefits, and more conspicuous than any other being whatever; but as to His form and size, He is most obscure. All materials, let them be ever so costly, are unworthy to compose

COINS ISSUED UNDER THE ROMAN EMPEROR CLAUDIUS

Obverse:—Greek words meaning "King Agrippa, friend of Cæsar," with the King, head veiled, sacrificing, and crowned by two females, one of which is Victory. *Reverse*:—Two hands joined together within a wreath; an Imperial head in countermark.

an image of Him, and all arts are unable to express a notion of Him. We cannot see anything like Him, nor is it right to try and imagine what He is like. We see His works, the light, the heaven, the earth, the sun and moon, the waters, the generations of animals, and the growth of fruits. God did not make these things with hands, nor with labour, nor did He need the assistance of any one to help Him; but as His will resolved they should be made and be good also, so they were made and became good immediately. All men ought to follow

Him in the exercise of virtue; for this way of worship of God is the most holy." It must have needed a good deal of courage to write this defence of the Jews and their faith in the capital of the nation who were their enemies, and we may remember this to his credit as we read the history of Josephus.

CHAPTER XVII

70–135 C.E.

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

Civil war in Jerusalem.

One by one the remaining Judean towns were now captured, and then Jerusalem itself was besieged. The enthusiastic, brave Zealots had gathered together in the Holy City under John of Gischala, and elaborate preparations were made for the defence. But not all were for a continuation of resistance to the Romans, and almost every family was divided into those who clamoured for war and those who desired peace. Rabban Jochanan ben Zakkai, of whom we shall hear a great deal later, was the leader of the latter party. Rather than be killed in Jerusalem, he escaped to the Roman lines in a coffin, and obtained permission from the Roman general to establish a school of learning at the city of Jabneh. But this was not the only division within the walls of Jerusalem. The Zealots suspected the members of the Sanhedrin and other officials of desiring to surrender the city. Some of them were imprisoned, civil war broke out in the city, and a large number of men on both sides were killed. In addition to all this, Simon ben Giora, a man who had led a party of rebels against the Romans, but who was not trusted by the Zealots, came to Jerusalem. He was refused admission into the city, which he then attacked, and again there was much bloodshed.

The fall of Jerusalem.

Meanwhile Vespasian had been appointed Emperor at Rome. His son Titus (called "The delight of all mankind") then became leader of the Roman forces. He assembled his huge army in front of Jerusalem, and demanded the surrender of the inhabitants. The outer wall of the city was captured after a fierce struggle. But famine and sickness killed more of the inhabitants than did the missiles of

TITUS

(Bust in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence)

the Roman soldiers. At last, on the 9th day of the month of Ab in the year 70 C.E., the inner wall of the city was taken, and the Temple burnt. It is not necessary to describe the terrible scenes that took place; it is sufficient to mention that no fewer than one million people lost their lives during the siege. The last remnant of Judea's independence was buried amid the ruins of Jerusalem, and the Fast of Ab was instituted to commemorate the sad event, which had been brought about, as we have seen, very largely by quarrels within the walls of the fallen city.

Many of the captives were taken away to become slaves; so many that the slave-markets were glutted, and thousands *Captives in Rome.*

Obverse *Reverse*

COIN ISSUED WITH NAME OF TITUS

Obverse:—Greek words with name of Titus, and his head.
Reverse:—Greek words meaning "King Agrippa"; Victory, holding a palm and a crown.

could not be sold. John of Gischala and Simon ben Giora, together with seven hundred of their followers, were brought to Rome in order that they might walk in the triumphal procession which the Romans organised to celebrate their victory. At the close of the siege Simon had leaped into one of the vaults beneath the city, and, being provided with tools, had tried to hew his way out. But, coming upon a great rock, he was prevented from accomplishing his purpose. Not having any food, he determined to die like a hero. Clad in a white robe covered with a purple mantle, he suddenly appeared before the Roman sentinels, who were resting among the ruins of the Temple. They gazed at him in terror. He merely said: "Take me to your general," and, announcing himself, he was instantly thrown into chains and taken to Rome, where he took part, with a halter round his neck, in the procession of the captives in chains through the streets. When this was

finished, he was hurled from a precipice as a human sacrifice to the Roman gods. Coins, bearing the inscription

Obverse *Reverse*

COINS AFTER THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

Obverse:—Latin words with name of Emperor Vespasian, and the head of the Emperor. *Reverse:*—Latin words: "Judæa Capta" (captive Judea); a palm-tree; on the left side a Jew standing, his hands tied behind his back; behind him a shield; on the right, a Jewess seated on a cuirass, weeping.

"*Judea devicta*" (conquered Judea) and "*Judea capta*" (captive Judea), were issued to celebrate the victory, and a beautiful arch, which still exists, was erected in Rome in honour of Titus. The golden candlestick, the vessels of the Temple, the golden table, and the scrolls of the Law were deposited in the imperial palace, and are depicted on the arch, a portion of which is shown in the accompanying illustration.

COIN OF THE SAME PERIOD

Latin words: "Judea devicta" (conquered Judea). Victory standing to the right, placing left foot on helmet, and engraving the letters S.P.Q.R. (Senatus Populusque Romanus — the Senate and the Roman people) on a shield, which is attached to a palm-tree. At the foot of palm to the right Judea is seated on ground.

Further revolts.

Some of the Zealots continued the revolt after the fall of Jerusalem, but they were soon crushed. At the fortress of Masada the garrison of Zealots bravely agreed to kill themselves rather than fall into the hands of the enemy. The name Judea was now altered to "Syria Palestina," and that of Jerusalem to

CARRYING THE SPOILS FROM JERUSALEM

(From a bas-relief on Titus's Arch in Rome)

"Ælia Capitolina." The country was almost deprived of its inhabitants, but there still remained a small band who did not despair even now of successfully meeting the mighty power of Rome. They still hoped for the approach of a Messiah who would deliver them. There were continual outbreaks, but the Jews were powerless against the iron hand of Rome. Under the Emperor Trajan there was a revolt on the part of the Jews all over the world. They made a determined attempt to regain their national independence, but they were crushed, and hundreds of thousands were killed in cold blood.

Bar Cochba's rebellion.

In the year 132 C.E., whilst the famous Rabbi Akiba was the head of the Jewish community, and Hadrian was the

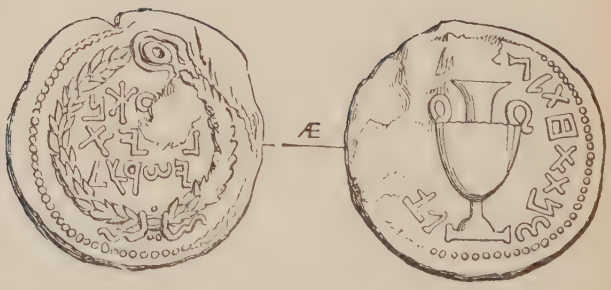
Obverse *Reverse*

COIN ISSUED DURING BAR COCHBA'S REBELLION

Obverse:—Hebrew word "Simon" (Bar Cochba s name). Figure of the "Beautiful Gate" of the Temple; above, a star. *Reverse:*—Hebrew words: "The deliverance of Jerusalem." An *Ethrog* and *Lulab.*

Roman Emperor, the last revolt broke out. The leader of this last desperate effort was a man named "Bar Cochba" ("son of a star"), who proclaimed himself to be the Messiah. The people flocked to his banner, and even Rabbi Akiba believed in him. Bar Cochba is fabled to have been a man of immense strength, who cast back with his knees the huge stones thrown by the Roman machines. He is said to have tested the valour of his soldiers by ordering each to cut off a finger, and, when the wise men objected to do this, the legend tells us that he issued an order that every horseman must show that he could tear up a cedar of Lebanon by the roots while running at full speed. A very large number of Jews from all over the country fought under Bar Cochba's leadership, and for some time he was successful in resisting the might of

Rome, often escaping from his Roman foes by means of the underground tunnels, the construction of which was one of the weapons of warfare in those days. At length, however, the Roman general triumphed, the last attempt to regain the independence of Judea failed, and Bar Cochba was killed. He was afterwards known by the name of "Bar Cosiba"; some explain this name to mean "son of a lie" (on account of his failures), and others to be Cosiba, a village which was believed to be his birthplace.



CHAPTER XVIII

THE TALMUD

In the Yeshibah

It is a fine summer night as we enter the Yeshibah (or House of Learning) in one of the towns of the Russian Pale of Settlement. The room is large, square, and lofty; the windows (some of which are thrown open, owing to the heat) reach nearly to the ceiling, and the walls, we notice, are whitewashed. Long wooden tables, with benches on each side, and movable desks are to be seen in many parts of the large room. There is only one chair, which is placed at the head of one of the tables. It is used by the Principal, who will arrive the next morning. The room is lit by large wax candles, which are placed in copper candlesticks in the centre of each of the tables. As we enter, the light seems somewhat dim, and the candlesticks are covered with wax, which has dripped from the candles. On each desk is stuck a smaller candle without any candlestick. The candles, both large and small, are, we learn, the gift of pious, charitable women, who are anxious to provide a light for the study of the Talmud. On the tables are piles of books, evidently much used—some with covers, others without. They are nearly all volumes of the Talmud. Some of the books are open; others are closed, with leaves folded to mark the place of study. *The Yeshibah.*

The room resounds with the voices of the many students. Some of them are chanting aloud, others are humming to themselves in an undertone portions of the Talmud which they are trying to master. A number of the students are sitting at the tables. Others are standing at the desks. A few are walking about, discussing the books they have been studying. Most of them seem to be young men from nineteen to twenty-five years of age, although next *The students.*

door (at the Beth Hamedrash) there are several old men (like those appearing in the picture opposite) poring over the old, old, dusty leaves, as they have done for fifty years and more. All the students wear velvet skull-caps. Their clothing is old and worn, and though every face has an intelligent, bright look, they are pale and thin, for years of study have had their effect on their bodies.

In the Cheder. The training of the Yeshibah *Bachur* (youth) commenced at an early age, for he was probably lulled to sleep in his cradle with sweet Hebrew melodies. As soon as he was able to walk his father took him to the Beth Hamedrash, and there he listened to the morning and evening prayers and joined in the responses. At five he was sent to a Cheder (חֶדֶר, the Hebrew for room). This was an appropriate name for the "school," for the place of study was no more than a room, often a garret or underground cellar where the teacher and his family also lived. The teacher's wife did not allow the instruction to interfere with her domestic duties, and she would supervise the cooking whilst her husband taught his pupils to read and translate the Bible—the foundation on which all other study rested. It was a custom in the Cheder for each pupil in turn to bring a candle, and the fact that the lesson could only last so long as the candle burned provided much speculation among some of the boys, who would not bring a large candle for obvious reasons.

Leaving home. After two or three years the student was sufficiently advanced to go to a higher school. Here the surroundings were much the same, but the teaching was different. The student learnt the Mishna and Gemara and dived into some of the ancient commentators, his father or the Rabbi of the congregation sometimes testing his knowledge. He went from one Cheder to another till he was *Barmitzvah* ("son of the commandment"), and then he was expected to look after himself. His village was a small one, and so he had to travel to some distant town to a well-known Rabbi in order that he might obtain more knowledge, and dip more deeply into the precious well of Talmudical lore. His travelling had to be economical, for he must accomplish great ends by humble and difficult means—this was indeed the time of "plain living and high thinking." The road was then, as it is now, the cheapest form of travel, and so

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he tramped along from town to town towards his goal, finding in each stopping-place kind-hearted persons to give him food and temporary shelter. When at last he reached his destination, he found a bed in the form of a sack filled with straw in the Beth Hamedrash. It was not very comfortable, but it served its purpose, for the Yeshibah student is cheerful under circumstances that would discourage and dishearten many another. In the winter he would drag his mattress to the fireside, and with his cloak as a blanket would sink into contented sleep. He had no luxuries and very few comforts, but he was striving towards his ambition, and was satisfied. His luggage was scanty, for his belongings were few; it comprised a small bundle, containing the most necessary of his daily wants, a set of tephillin, a prayer-book, a Bible, and perhaps also a pocket-knife.

"Tag essen."

He was not so assured of his food as he was of opportunities of learning, for provision is not made in the Yeshibah for feeding all the students, although tickets are supplied to some of them, available at the houses of persons who are willing to entertain them. He was obliged to have what is known as "Tag essen" (eating days). Various members of the congregation give food to the students, and the new-comer had to find his way to these hospitable people. Those who have been in the town some time manage to go to a different family each day, but the beginner, owing to his lack of acquaintances, often goes without any food at all. Sometimes he will, in return for his meals, instruct the children of the house. It is not an easy life, and it is surprising that such a system has produced so many great scholars.

A passage from the Talmud.

Most of the students of the Yeshibah have, however, gone through this early training. Let us now go over to one of the tables, where a group of young students are swaying to and fro, and repeating to themselves in a chanting tone the portion of the Talmud which the Rabbi has set them to learn. "The Mishna tells us," they begin, "that when two persons hold a garment in their hands, one saying *he* had found it, and the other declaring *he* had found it; one saying that the whole of it belongs to *him*, and the other making the same claim, they shall divide it between them. The Gemara asks: 'Why did the Rabbis of the Mishna find it necessary to mention two claims for

each of the two men? Would not one claim have been sufficient, namely, either the claim of having found the garment, or that it belonged to them? For it is clear that by saying they had found it, and that it belonged to them, each of the claimants meant the same, and there is, therefore, a needless repetition.' 'No,' answers the Gemara, 'I found it' refers to a dispute over an article which has been found, and 'The whole belongs to me' refers to a dispute over an article which has been purchased for money."

Why there are two claims.

In the case of an article that is found, merely to say "The whole belongs to me" is not sufficient, as he might only have looked at it without picking it up. Moreover, "Findings are not keepings" was as much a part of Jewish as it is of English law. Therefore it is necessary to specify a different kind of claim (in addition to: "I have found it"), viz. "It belongs to me." The law is, however, the same, whether the dispute be over an article found in the street, or purchased for money; for in both cases the claimants must share the article between them. This passage gives us an instance (and we could add very many others) how the Rabbis of the Talmud settled difficult points of law which have puzzled learned lawyers of all nations many hundreds of years since their time. Thus it is a principle of international law (the law that is common to all countries alike) that it is not sufficient merely to *discover* a new land to make it belong to you. You must settle a colony or fly a flag or take some other similar step. In the same way the Rabbis laid it down that it was not sufficient to claim a thing and say that it belongs to you. You must claim to have actually found it and done some act indicating possession.

Studying the Midrash.

But what are those students reading yonder? They do not seem to have such serious faces as the group from which we have just come. We learn that they have already finished the passage in the Talmud which the Rabbi bade them learn, and they are now reading through, before undertaking more serious work, a portion of the Midrash, with its explanation of the words of the Bible, and its stories and anecdotes with which the explanations are illustrated. The students are reading an explanation in the Midrash of the words of the Psalmist: "I said I will

take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue" (Psalm xxxix. 1). They are told of the bad effects of sinning with the tongue in the form of slander, lying, &c., and of the proverb: "Death and life are in the power of the tongue" (Prov. xviii. 21). To illustrate this proverb the Midrash tells the following story, and it is this which has brightened the faces of the studious young men.

A Persian King and a lioness's milk.

It is related of a Persian King that his physicians ordered him to drink the milk of a lioness, and one of his servants offered to procure the rare medicine. Taking with him some sheep, with which to lure the beast, he actually succeeded in obtaining milk from a lioness. On his journey homewards, being tired, he fell into a deep slumber, during which the various members of his body commenced disputing as to which of them had contributed most towards the success of their owner in obtaining so rare a thing as milk from a lioness.

A heated discussion.

Said the feet: "There can be no doubt that we alone have brought about this successful undertaking. Without us there could have been no setting out on this dangerous venture." "Not so," said the hands, "the help you gave would have been of no avail had not our power been called into requisition. It is the service we rendered that enabled our owner to procure milk from the lioness." "Neither of you could have rendered any service," exclaimed the eyes, "without the sight which we supplied." "And yet," interrupted the heart, "had not I induced our owner to think of the idea, no steps would have been taken to bring any of your powers into exercise." At last the tongue put in her claim, but was utterly ridiculed by the unanimous opinions of all the other contending members of the body. "*You*," they scornfully replied, "*you*, who have not the free power of action which is possessed by all and each of us; *you*, who are imprisoned in the narrow space of the human mouth—*you* dare to put in a claim to have contributed to this success!"

An unfortunate slip.

In the midst of this argument the man woke up, and continued his journey homewards. Having been brought before the King with the much-desired milk, the man, by a slip of the tongue, said: "Here, I have brought your Majesty the dog's milk." The King, being very angry at what he thought to be an insulting remark, ordered the

man to be put to death. On the way to the execution all the members of the body—heart, eyes, feet, and hands—trembled, and were terribly afraid. "Did I not tell you," said the tongue, "that my power is above all the united powers you possess? You ridiculed me for my trouble. What do you think of my power now? Are you now prepared to acknowledge my power to be greater than all yours?"

The tongue to the rescue.

When all the members of the body consented to the tongue's proposition, the tongue requested and obtained a short reprieve, so that it could make a last appeal for the King's mercy. When the man was brought to the King, his tongue started in all its eloquence. "Is this the reward," it began, "great and just King, to be meted out to the only one of your Majesty's servants who was glad of the opportunity to offer his life to fulfil his King's desire, who gladly carried his life in his hand to obtain for his august master what scarcely ever was obtained by mortal man?" "But," replied the King, "your own statement was that you brought me dog's milk instead of the lioness's milk which you undertook to procure." "Not so, O gracious King," replied the tongue; "I brought the identical milk that your Majesty required. It was merely by an unfortunate mistake in my speech that I changed the name. My words will be found to be correct if your Majesty will condescend to make use of the milk I procured, for it will effect the cure of your Majesty's disease." The milk was put to the test, and was found to be that of a lioness. Thereupon all the various members of the body said: "Now we acknowledge that you have spoken the truth, as it is said, 'Death and life are in the power of the tongue.'"

"He that considereth the poor."

Another group is reading that portion of the Midrash which discusses the words of the Psalmist: "Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble" (Psalm xli. 1). "Abba, the son of Jeremiah," runs the passage, "says, in the name of Meir, that he who considereth the poor is a man whose better qualities prevail over his bad ones. Issi says that the words refer to a man who gives even a very small coin to the poor. Rabban Jochanan's opinion is that it means a person who buries a dead body found in the field. The

Rabbis say: 'A person who avoids the company of the wicked.' Rabbi Huna's view was: 'A person who visits the sick,' for every one who visits a sick person takes a sixtieth part away from any illness he may have, and sympathy often cures more than much medicine."

Rabbi Jonah's charity.

"Rabbi Jonah said, on the other hand," the passage continues: "'It is not written he that *giveth* to the poor, but he that *considereth* the poor' (that is to say, he that deals wisely with the poor, and helps them without making them feel the sense of shame which the receipt of charity may cause them)." One student reminds the others that Rabbi Jonah, who is thus mentioned, was told one day that a person who was formerly wealthy had met with reverses in fortune, and he approached the man with the words: "I understand you will probably receive some money in the future, and I shall therefore be glad to advance you some for your business, and then you can pay me back when you are no longer in need." The question of assisting the man having thus been opened in an inoffensive manner, he was only too glad of the help, and was then told that there was no need to repay the money as it was a gift.

How the night is spent.

Thus the night is spent. Many pass the greater part of it in study, even up to daybreak. They flit from one passage to another—here following the delicate threads of reasoning, there analysing an intricate argument in a difficult legal discussion on one of the sentences of the Mishna. Now and then they cross-examine themselves, until they fully understand and can explain the difficulties of the most complicated portions of the Talmud, and the most puzzling verses of the Bible are as clear as daylight. Thus is Judaism and the Jewish traditional law kept alive in the dim candle-light of a Russian Yeshibah over eighteen hundred years after the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem by the Romans.

The Principal arrives.

In the morning, after the students have had their short but well-earned rest, the time approaches when the Principal of the Yeshibah is due to arrive. Every student has prepared and mastered the portions which the Rabbi set for study. As the Principal enters the room, a hush falls on all those present. The pupils stand, as the Rabbi takes his seat, and then they sit down on the benches at the tables, and wait in silence till they are called upon in

turn to explain the set portion. The Principal is very strict, and the slightest flaw in explaining the passage to him is sure to provoke his anger. At last he points to a student, and says: "Abraham, you say the *blatt*" (explain the portion).

Abraham says the "blatt."

Abraham commences as follows: "The Mishna states that if Reuben see people in his field hunting a stag that is too lame to run away or pigeons that cannot fly, and they be caught in Reuben's field, then the stag or pigeons, as the case may be, belong to Reuben. Rabbi Jehudah, in the name of Rabbi Samuel, says in the Gemara that the passage in the Mishna means that Reuben only obtains the animals if he stands near the field at the time of the hunting, and declares, 'Whatever is in my field is mine.' But should Reuben be away at the time, or, if he is at home, he does not say, 'Whatever is in my field is mine,' then neither the stag nor the pigeons are his."

How a field and a yard differ.

The question is then asked, with reference to Rabbi Jehudah's opinion: "Why should not Reuben obtain the animals even in his absence? For Rabbi José, the son of Hanina, said that whatever is lost in a man's yard becomes his property, even in his absence, and without his knowledge. A field should in this regard be like a yard, and therefore the pigeons and the stag that stray into it should belong to Reuben, even without his knowledge, and in his absence. Why, then, does Rabbi Jehudah insist upon Reuben's presence, and upon his declaration?" To this the answer is given that Rabbi José considers that the presence and declaration should not apply in the case of a yard, which, on account of the way it is built and the fact that it is private, tends to keep whatever strays or is lost in it. On the other hand, in a field, which is more in the nature of an open space and a public ground, there is less likelihood of keeping whatever is lost in it, and therefore it is necessary for the owner to be present and to declare: "Whatever is in my field is mine." And so Abraham goes on in his explanation of the *blatt*, giving argument after argument, explanation upon explanation, till around almost every word there is a discussion, in order that all may be made clear, and authority be found for all the Laws of the Mishna and the commentary, or "Gemara," which has been built up around them.

CHAPTER XIX

THE TALMUD (*continued*)

How it was Built Up

How the Talmud was built up.

We understand now that the Talmud is not a mere collection of fairy-tales and sayings, though there are very many of these to be found scattered throughout its pages. We find, indeed, some difficulty in following the language and the style, for the people who are speaking to us from the pages of the Talmud lived more than a thousand years ago. We are puzzled, too, by the various terms, "Mishna," "Gemara," "Midrash," &c. But soon everything is clear. Two thousand years ago people forgot the meaning of words and sentences, as sometimes they do now, and did not always understand the principles underlying particular laws. They found that many of the laws of the Bible, consisting as they did of short, simple sentences, would have been difficult, and sometimes impossible, to carry out without explanation, especially in the changed circumstances that new times and conditions brought about.

Two problems to face.

These explanations, we are told, were given by the principal learned men of each generation (after Hillel's time they began to be called "Rabbis"—masters; whilst all the teachers mentioned in the Mishna are called "Tannaim"—"reciters," *i.e.* of the words of the Mishna), and they thus gradually built up the "Temple" of Judaism of which the Bible Laws were the foundation. The wise men of Palestine said that the Law was made for man, and man was not made for the Law; that it was necessary to add to the commands in the Bible by way of explanation, in order that people might understand their real meaning. They had two problems to face. They found *laws* in the Bible, and it was necessary to explain them and find authority for this explanation. They also found *moral rules* in the Bible, which said to them, for instance, "Love

thy neighbour as thyself." The question then arose for them to decide in what ways they could obey the Biblical command—what were the highest forms of kindness and charity to their neighbours.

Instance of a Law explained:—How the Sabbath should be spent.

Thus (to take an instance of a Bible *law* explained) the Rabbis took the command, "Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations on the Sabbath day" (Exod. xxxv. 3). They said that it was impossible to make the Sabbath a day of joyfulness, as was commanded, if people had to shiver in the cold on a winter's day, or grope their way in the dark on the long Friday evenings of the winter season. And so they argued that, although it was commanded that the Jews should not kindle fires themselves, there was no reason why non-Jews should not do so for them, and they got over their difficulty in this way. In later times (in the eighteenth century) a Rabbi, arguing on the same lines, went as far as to say that a person who refused to eat warm food on the Sabbath was guilty of breaking the laws of Judaism, because everybody needed warm and nourishing food to maintain good health, and the laws of the Sabbath were never intended to be harmful to health. Thus, although it was not permitted to cook on the Sabbath, food cooked on Friday might be kept warm in an oven for the Sabbath. Much ridicule has been cast at the Rabbis for their minute details concerning the Sabbath, and they themselves described certain laws as "mountains hanging by a hair," and others as "floating in mid-air," the former having only very slight derivation from Scripture, the latter none at all. But, though some of their regulations were really hair-splittings, their explanations made it possible for the religion of the Jews to develop, and they always acted on the principle that "the Sabbath is made for man; not man for the Sabbath." Thus, although carrying was not permitted on the Sabbath, yet, if a town was surrounded by a wall, it might be considered as one large enclosure, and the inhabitants of the city were allowed to carry articles in it.

Instance of a moral rule explained:—The meaning of "bearing a grudge."

Similarly (to take an instance of a *moral rule* explained), the Rabbis took the text: "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear a grudge" (Lev. xix. 18). "What is meant by this?" they asked themselves, and they illustrated their answer by two examples. "One person says to another, 'Lend me

your axe,' and he refuses to do so. On the morrow, the latter says to the former, 'Lend me your sickle,' whereupon he says, 'I will not lend you my sickle, because you would not lend me your axe.' That is 'avenging' the one unkind act by another. But if one person says to another, 'Lend me your axe,' and he refuses to do so, and on the following day, the latter says to the former, 'Lend me your sickle'; whereupon he says, 'Here it is, I am not going to be as disobliging as you were'—that is 'bearing a grudge.'" And the Rabbis quoted the "golden rule" of Hillel, "Do not unto others what thou wouldst not have them do unto thee."

Putting the Law into order.

In this way the Biblical laws were explained, extended, and made workable, adapted to later circumstances and climes, and so also a "fence" was put round the Law, as the men of the Great Synagogue had suggested. When a decision was given by one of the leading Rabbis, and was accepted by the other learned men of the time, it would become almost as much part of the "Law" as the original command to which it was added. These additions and explanations were handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth. Sometimes they were changed; and frequently, too, the teachers differed amongst themselves. It therefore became necessary to put all the various parts of the Law, as it had been handed down, into proper order.

The Mishna.

Hillel commenced this important work, and his successors (of whom we shall hear a good deal later on), such as Rabbi Akiba and Rabbi Meir, continued the task, which was finally completed by Rabbi Judah Ha-nasi (the Prince) about the year 220 C.E. The laws so put together were called the "Mishna" (מִשְׁנָה, from שָׁנָה, a Hebrew word meaning "to repeat"). The Mishna was divided into six great divisions, containing sixty-one sections. It was, for instance, one of the laws of the Mishna which the pupils in the Yeshibah discussed when they quoted the arguments of the Rabbis with regard to Reuben and the stag.

The Gemara.

The Rabbis had always had discussions on the exact meaning of particular laws handed down to them. The completion of the Mishna caused these discussions to increase. They would discuss a particular law; one of the Rabbis would give his opinion; he would be opposed by

another, who would show, either by reasoning or by the authority of an earlier Rabbi, that the first Rabbi's explanation was not necessarily the only correct one; then perhaps they would put on one side for a time, after some argument, the point they were discussing, and tell stories about the great man whose opinion had been mentioned, or give moral lessons or explanations of the Bible suggested by the subject under discussion. In this way a good deal of science, history, and legend of all kinds began to be woven round these discussions about the laws of the Mishna, and this, too, was handed down from generation to generation. In their turn these discussions and explanations of the Mishna were collected, in the same way as the laws of the Mishna itself had been gathered together, and this collection was called the "Gemara," from the Aramaic word גְּמַר, meaning "to learn" or "complete." Together the Mishna and Gemara—the traditional laws and the commentary on them—form the wonderful literature known as the "Talmud" (meaning "study").

The Talmud.

There are two forms of the Talmud. One was completed about the year 500 by the Rabbis Rabina and Ashi, who taught in the schools of Sura and Pumbaditha in Babylon, and this form was therefore called the "Babylonian Talmud" (or "Talmud Babli"); the other was put together about 200 years earlier, in Jerusalem, and is therefore called the Jerusalem Talmud (or "Talmud Jerushalmi"). The former is nowadays called שַׁ"ס for short (the first letters of the two words שִׁשָּׁה סְדָרִים, or the six parts into which it is divided). The Babylonian Talmud is much fuller than the other, and is the one now studied by most people.[1]

[1] The accompanying page of the Talmud is taken from the section *Baba Bathra*, dealing with rights of property. The large type in the centre of the page is the text of the Talmud itself, and the Mishna and Gemara will be found separated by the letters מתני׳ and גמ׳ respectively. On the left of the Talmud text is the commentary of the famous Solomon Bar Isaac (Rashi), who lived in France in the eleventh century. On the right is the *Tosephoth*, or "additional" commentary on the Talmud. The small type in the margin on the right hand side at the top contains references to the codes of Maimonides and other Rabbis. Below this is the commentary of "Rabbenu Gershom" (Rabbi Gershom ben Judah, who lived in France in the tenth and eleventh centuries). The small type in the margin on the left hand side contains alternative readings of the text and parallel passages in other parts of the Talmud.

תורה אור השלם

לעילא

The Midrash.

In addition to the Talmud there grew up books known as *Midrash*, מִדְרָשׁ or מִדְרָשִׁים (from the verb דָּרַשׁ, "to study"), which consist of explanations of the Bible, most of them containing moral maxims and stories and legends associated with the great men of Jewish history. It was a portion of the Midrash, for example, that the students of the Yeshibah were reading when they came to the story of the King and the lioness's milk. There are also three portions of the Midrash which deal with the laws of the Bible. They are known as *Mechilta* (on the book of Exodus), *Sifra* (on Leviticus), and *Sifré* (on Numbers and Deuteronomy).

High ideals.

The Talmud, as we shall see from the lives of some of the great men who built it up, contains some of the highest ideals and conceptions of life. Judaism was to concern itself not only with the Jewish people, but with all mankind. What can be finer, for example, than the following instance of the widest form of charity and kindness to human beings, whether they be of the same faith as ourselves or not? "Feed the hungry among the heathen, visit their sick, mourn with their bereaved, and bury their dead, to the end that peace and goodwill may prevail among all the families of man," for "the pious and virtuous of *all* nations shall take a part in the eternal bliss."

There is, however, another side to the Talmud, with which we shall now deal. As Bunyan wrote of his own book ("The Pilgrim's Progress"):—

"Would'st thou divert thyself."

". . . Would'st thou divert thyself from melancholy?
Would'st thou be pleasant, yet be far from folly?
Would'st thou read riddles and their explanation?
Or else be drownèd in thy contemplation? . . .
Would'st thou be in a dream, and yet not sleep?
Or, would'st thou in a moment laugh and weep?
Would'st thou lose thyself, and catch no harm?
And find thyself again without a charm?
Would'st read thyself, and read thou know'st not what?
And yet know whether thou art blest or not
By reading the same lines? O then come hither,
And lay my book, thy head and heart together."

CHAPTER XX

THE TALMUD (*continued*)[1]

Halacha and Agada

Dipping into the pages of the Talmud.

By and by, as we dip more and more into the pages of the Talmud, the strangeness passes away ; we gradually understand the peculiar language and become used to the unfamiliar people that we find there. As we get more at ease, we become interested in the conversations and the battles of words among the Rabbis of the Talmud. Sometimes, too, we feel as if we would like to put in a word of our own, answer an argument or explain one of the laws of the Mishna in a different way from Rav or Rabbi Meir—when perhaps we find in the next paragraph the very words that were on the tip of our tongue reproduced by a Rabbi who lived fifteen hundred years ago! In the course of time we even make personal acquaintances. We begin to distinguish, for instance, between a Tanna and an Amora, for, while a Tanna (who is one of the authors of the Mishna) speaks a more or less pure Hebrew, and is generally short and concise, an Amora (who is one of those who built up the Gemara), on the other hand, speaks Aramaic, and is either too abrupt or too lengthy in his arguments and explanations and reminiscences. He is generally, too, of a fighting disposition, and nothing seems to please him more than to engage in a warfare of words around the Torah and the Mishna. His "battles" are always pleasant and friendly, let us remember, as one of the Rabbis remarked: "Even a father and his son, a Rabbi and his disciples, strive with one another as if they were enemies when engaged in the study of the Law, but they do not move from the spot where they

[1] The author is especially indebted in this chapter to the writings of E. Deutsch and H. Sperling.

have been discussing before they love each other again, and they part in closest friendship." If we study the Talmud still more deeply, we are even able to distinguish between the thoughts and characters of one Amora and another, because every one has his own style, and this often helps us in piecing together the history of the time, and in deciding who it is that is speaking to us from the pages of the Gemara.

A vast encyclopedia.

As we proceed, we come to the conclusion that the Talmud is one vast encyclopedia, mainly of Jewish law, but also of much of the general knowledge in vogue among the Jews during the thousand years between 500 B.C. and 500 C.E. Jewish law covered all the actions of life, and hence the Rabbis had to acquire many varied branches of knowledge. In order, for instance, that they might be able to explain aright the laws relating to the proper care of the human body and the rules with regard to food and the killing of animals, they had to study the sciences of anatomy and physiology (which deal with the various parts of the body) both of human beings and beasts; in order that they might be able to fix the calendar, they were obliged to acquire a knowledge of astronomy; they learned mathematics, and especially geometry, so that they might decide on a variety of other matters, and were acquainted with laws about property, agriculture and botany, building, &c. Over a thousand teachers, living in different countries (such as Palestine, Babylon, Egypt, and Rome), contributed to the pages of the Talmud, and naturally we find that the book varies according to the character and knowledge of the various peoples whose views are quoted and discussed, and the times and countries in which they lived.

No lack of variety.

In fact we find no lack of variety, and so we need not complain of monotony. Superstition and beautiful thoughts, clever arguments and what seem to be foolish hair-splittings, are to be found sometimes side by side in its pages. Indeed, the Talmud would lose part of its value for us if this were not so, for we should not then be able so well to understand the real lives and characters of the different people who contributed to it. We are not sorry, therefore, that the compilers of the Talmud did not leave out those parts which seem to us in these days to fall

short of high ideals. The most childish trifle found by those who are exploring the ruins of ancient cities in, say, Palestine or Babylon is of value to those who understand these things, and who from them may obtain a number of surprisingly important results.

A great historical drama.

As we go on we meet Roman Emperors, Persian Kings, and Greek philosophers. Indeed, we seem to be witnessing a great historical drama, with a never-ending programme, an infinite number of actors and actresses, countless digressions and scenes, tragical asides, and even comical surprises. Amongst all the figures, however, there is one that is never off the stage for long, and at each succeeding appearance attracts our attention more and more: it is the figure of Israel, now bent, now erect, and again old and decrepit, then once more made young; yet never flinching from his self-imposed task of preserving the Law amid oppression and sorrow, and always hopeful and determined to play the part given to him to the very end. The Talmud is, indeed, a *national* book—a book throbbing with the life of the various sections of the community—for collected within its spacious covers we have the learning of the House of Study, the popular addresses given in the Synagogue, the beliefs and superstitions and prejudices of the man in the street, the anecdotes of the meal-table, the recollections of the old, and the frolics of the young.

Halacha and Agada.

It is only after a time that we learn to distinguish between the two currents that seem to run through the Talmud, the one called *Halacha* (rule), and consisting of arguments on points of Jewish law (such as the discussion about Reuben and the stag in the Yeshibah); and the other named *Agada* (legend), dealing with Jewish morals and many other matters by means of sayings, tales, and parables. In the Gemara the Halacha examined each line of the Mishna, inquiring for its authority, sometimes inserting a paragraph that had been omitted, altering a word, or striking out one or two passages that seemed to be opposed to each other, and generally bringing the laws with which it dealt into harmony with one another and with custom and common sense. The Agada, on the other hand, took possession of the prophecies, the moral rules, and the history of the Bible, and created out

of the Scripture passages a thousand subjects for discussion, or for telling a story that pointed a moral or illustrated a question put by one of the Rabbis of the Mishna (such as the tale told in the Yeshibah of the King and the lioness's milk). We can understand how the Agada must have poured oil on the "troubled waters" of the difficult debates in the Gemara, and was, to use its own phrase, "a comfort and a blessing."

A welcome digression.

Let us assume, for example, that we have been studying the Gemara for some hours. We have been in the thick of the argument, siding now with Rav, now with Samuel. We have been discussing what materials may or may not be used for the Sabbath light. We feel rather tired, our brain is fagged, and we would like some relaxation. Must we close the Gemara, and seek for entertainment elsewhere? Not by any means. "Turn to it again and again, for it contains everything," says the proverb. How welcome then comes a discussion of the contradictory passages in the Book of Proverbs; the proof which Rabban Gamliel gives of the saying that "there is nothing new under the sun" by showing a disciple a dish of meat prepared in the shape of mushrooms; the story of Hillel teaching the Law to a heathen while he stood on one foot! When we have read the interesting conversations between the Roman Emperor Antoninus and Rabbi Judah the Prince in the underground passage leading from the Emperor's palace to the Rabbi's house, or the pretty love-story of Rabbi Akiba, or the touching narrative of the death of Rabbi Meir's two sons—his "jewels," as his wife called them—we enter with all the more zest into the legal arguments around which everything revolves. For there is this about the Talmudical wanderings which we should not forget—they never lose themselves. Suddenly, when least expected, the original question is repeated, together with the answer, manufactured as it were out of these side-issues of which we did not always see the drift.

Our imagination all aglow.

In circumstances like these, when our intellect is having a little rest, our imagination is fired and all aglow. We appreciate then the historical narratives, the tales, the fables, the legends, the encounters between a sneering Roman Proconsul and a witty Tanna, a pestering Min (heathen) getting "floored" by the smart repartee of an Amora. The

change from the Halacha to the Agada is like that from the schoolroom to the playground; for the true character of a boy is shown as much in his play as at his studies. In the same way, really to understand the mind of the Jew, to know his outlook on life, his beliefs about God and man, what he thinks about the future of the world and the destiny of his own race, we must turn to the Agada. For, whereas the Halacha represents the opinions of the authorised teachers, whose decisions were practised in daily life, the Agada represents more the beliefs and ideals of the people as a whole, varying in its contents, just as the people themselves were composed of a variety of different elements. It is, therefore, from the historical traditions, the discussions on Biblical passages, the tales, the moral maxims, the wise sayings, and the fables of the Agada, which we find scattered here and there throughout the pages of the Gemara, that we may endeavour to piece together some idea of the lives and thoughts and customs of the "people of the book" in ancient times.

"How they gleam, and glow, and glitter!"

Do not let us then dismiss as unimportant the Agada of the Talmud, with (as the German poet Heine has put it) its

> "Beautiful old stories,
> Tales of angels, fairy legends,
> Stilly histories of martyrs,
> Festal songs and words of wisdom;
> Hyperboles, most quaint it may be,
> Yet replete with strength, and fire,
> And faith—how they gleam,
> And glow, and glitter! . . ."

At the same time we must not forget that the main purpose of the Rabbis was the serious discussion of points of Jewish law—the Halacha; this indeed forms the principal contents of the Talmud. The Talmud contains a conversation which illustrates this point between a Rabbi who was learned in the Agada and another who taught the Halacha. The latter said to the Agadist: "Look! how people run after you, whilst my lectures are empty." "Yes, that is very true," was the reply, "but I sell only glittering, coloured pebbles that are of very little value, whilst you sell diamonds for which there are very few buyers."

How Judaism was preserved.

It was by means of the teaching of the "Law," as developed in the Talmud, that the Rabbis of old saved

Israel's faith from the burning embers of the Holy Temple. Jerusalem had fallen; the Temple was a heap of ashes; the sacrifices could no more be offered on the altar, accompanied by songs of praise and joyful music. It was then that Rabban Jochanan ben Zakkai (about whom we shall hear a good deal later) escaped from the besieged city of Jerusalem to found the "vineyard" of Jabneh, and there preserve the ripe clusters of beautiful thoughts and wise laws which had grown up through the tender care and the wisdom and the holiness of the sages of old. Let us then hear something about the lives and teachings of some of these wonderful teachers, who lived and died for the religion of their fathers. Their sayings and doings form so large a part of the wonderful book—the Talmud—about which we have just been hearing, and they did so much to keep alive and develop the Jewish religion, which has grown into the Judaism which is practised to-day, that no part of Jewish history is more important or full of interest.

A warning and a comfort.

"The day is short and the work is great," said one of these men; "but the labourers are idle, though the reward be great, and the Master of the work presses. Thou art not bound to complete the work: but thou must not, therefore, cease from it. If thou hast worked much, great shall be thy reward: for the Master who employed thee is faithful in his payment. But know that the true reward is not of this world." We cannot help being impressed by this saying, for it comes to us both as a warning and a comfort—a warning that "the day is short and the work is great," and a comfort that the completion of the work is not expected of us. For we have only been able just to dip into a portion of one or two of the pages of the Talmud, and we feel like the old Rabbi who modestly said that his learning was like the water which a fly, dipping its body into the great ocean, obtained from it. But, if we had been enabled to study it thoroughly, we should certainly consider that it is, next to the Bible, the most wonderful literature that the world has produced.

CHAPTER XXI

70 B.C.–10 C.E.

STORIES OF THE RABBIS

I. Hillel. הִלֵּל

Hillel journeys to Jerusalem.

During the reign of Herod the Great there lived a man who will be remembered as one of the noblest characters and greatest teachers in Jewish history. His name was Hillel. In the same way as the name of Herod will always be associated with deeds of cruelty and tyranny, so Hillel will live for all time as one of those great, good men whose works and teachings never die. He was descended from King David, and belonged to a family which had remained in Babylon after the return under Zerubbabel. His family had fallen on bad times when Hillel was quite a young man, but this did not prevent his seeking after knowledge. He was an earnest young scholar, and, not being able to obtain all the learning he desired in the Babylonian schools, he decided to travel to Jerusalem, and there seek "fresh woods and pastures new" in Jewish scholarship. He naturally found his way to the great school of learning in the Holy City, where the Bible was explained and the Jewish laws taught by the leading Rabbis of the time, Shemaiah and Abtalion. The latter, it will be remembered, were members of the Sanhedrin which tried Herod the Great; they were considered the greatest scholars of the period when Hillel was a young man, and Hillel afterwards called them "the greatest men of their generation."

"Are you poorer than Hillel?"

It was against Jewish law to teach it for money, and the teacher might only charge for lessons given in time he might otherwise devote to trade. In the higher branches of study, too, no payment at all was demanded

by the Rabbis, although the doorkeepers at the school sometimes received fees. The Rabbis, accordingly, all followed some other occupation in addition to explaining and teaching the Law, and their pupils, too, were obliged to support themselves in a similar way. Hillel, it is said, was a wood-cutter. Half his earnings in these pupil days of his he devoted to supporting himself, and the other half he paid to the doorkeeper of the House of Study. He must have been very poor in these early days, for his poverty afterwards became proverbial. In later years a man who pleaded poverty as an excuse for not studying the Law, met with the question, "Are you poorer than Hillel?"

Listening by the window.

One Friday he had not earned the usual sum. It was a dark, bitterly cold winter day when Hillel arrived at the school on the eve of Sabbath, and the snow was falling fast. Not having the usual fee to give the doorkeeper, he was turned away when he presented himself at the door. But so eager was he to catch the wise words falling from the lips of the Rabbis that he took advantage of the approaching darkness, and climbed up to one of the windows of the house, and there, through a hole, he was able to listen to the "words of the living God," as explained by the Rabbis.

Worth breaking the Sabbath.

When the Rabbis came to the school early next morning, the dawn seemed to be delayed longer than usual, and Shemaiah turned to his colleague and said: "Brother Abtalion, our school is strangely dark this morning." Then they looked up to see whether the snow was not covering the window, and preventing the daylight from entering. But, instead, they saw the form of a man on the window-sill, covered with snow. And outside they found Hillel, half frozen with the cold and quite unconscious. He was, of course, taken down, and, although it was the Sabbath, the good Rabbis kindled a fire, prepared a hot bath, and rubbed him with oil. Hillel soon revived with warmth and food, and the Rabbis remarked, as they placed him before the fire: "Surely such an one must be worth our breaking the Sabbath, for the young man will keep many Sabbaths in return for the one which is broken for him now." They allowed him henceforward to attend the school without payment, and they soon

discovered how eager Hillel was to study, and how sweet was his character.

"Many Passovers."

Many years afterwards Hillel again came to Jerusalem from Babylon (for he had returned to the land of his birth after that memorable day when he listened, amid the falling flakes of snow, through the window of the House of Study). It was Passover time, and that year the eve of the festival fell on the Sabbath. The Rabbis were discussing whether, in the circumstances, the Sabbath would be broken if the Paschal lamb were offered. But they could not make up their minds, for they had forgotten what the law on the subject really was, as such an incident had not occurred within the memory of any of them. At last some one said: "A man is come up from Babylon, and 'Hillel the Babylonian' is his name. He is a pupil of the great Rabbis, Shemaiah and Abtalion. Let us ask him, for he must know whether we are allowed to do this or not." But the Rabbis laughed and said: "Will this Babylonian be able to help us?" (In those days the men of Palestine had a great contempt for those who lived in Babylon.) However, Hillel was brought in, and the question was put to him. He replied: "Surely there is not one Passover alone in the year that puts aside the Sabbath: there are many such." Of course what he meant was that, just as the usual public offerings were made on the Sabbath as on other days, this might be done with the Paschal lamb on the Sabbath before Passover as well.

"No hope from this Babylonian."

But the Rabbis laughed again, saying: "Did not we say, 'There is no hope from this Babylonian?' Fancy his saying that there is more than one Passover in the year!" Hillel then tried to reason the matter out with the Heads of the Sanhedrin. But this was all in vain, and they would not accept the clever arguments. At last he told them that he had the Law from his teachers, Shemaiah and Abtalion, and it was only then that they accepted the tradition. They realised that Hillel possessed far greater knowledge of the Law than any of them, and so they resigned their positions, and appointed him as Head of the Sanhedrin in their stead. The members of this great council were not required to be rich or to belong to a great family. But, whether they were rich or poor, they

had to be very wise and very good as well, and Hillel possessed both these qualities. He did not become proud in consequence of this appointment. On the contrary, he said he was very sorry that they had to appoint a man from Babylon to the important post, when they might have had an opportunity of studying under the great Rabbis, Shemaiah and Abtalion, in their own city. They might thus have acquired the same knowledge that he possessed. "It is not because I am cleverer than you," said the humble Rabbi, "that I have been appointed Head of the Sanhedrin, but because you have not had opportunities which fortune placed in my path."

Hillel's "golden rule."

Hillel gave utterance to many famous sayings. But that by which he is best known is his "golden rule." A man came to him, and, wishing to scoff at religion with its many rules, challenged Hillel to teach him the whole of Judaism whilst he stood on one foot, that is to say, by reducing it to a few simple principles. Hillel was never angry, and never rejected people who appeared to ask foolish questions. He would try and turn their folly to profitable account. On this occasion, too, the great Rabbi was equal to his questioner, and replied: "Do not unto others what thou wouldst not have done to thyself. That is the whole law. All else is explanation. Go now and learn it." Hillel was thus able pithily to express what Judaism has always taught, both before his time and since. He followed the old command in the Bible: "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart . . . Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Lev. xix. 17, 18).

"Separate not thyself from the community."

"Separate not thyself from the community" was another of Hillel's sayings—"do not be of those who astonish people by their doings, by acting contrary to the general rule." He was thus anxious that his people should cling together, in order that their faith might be preserved. By his maxim Hillel taught, too, the lesson that it is not wise or proper to appear conspicuous, to indulge in vain display, to behave differently from others unnecessarily, or to be unduly "cranky" or peculiar. For this, the Rabbis taught, makes a man's neighbour think that he wishes to push himself forward, and be boastful and vain. "More-

over," they said, "man should regard himself as part of the whole community when he acts, and not merely as having only himself to consider." This lesson naturally followed from Hillel's "golden rule." The saying meant, also, that a rich man or a scholar should not separate himself from those who are not so wealthy or learned and despise them. Rather should he desire to share his riches and knowledge with others, who are not so fortunate as to possess either.

The "crown of the Law."

Hillel had an implicit faith in the doctrine that punishment was meted out to every one who did wrong. He once saw the skull of a dead man floating on the water, and thus addressed it: "Because thou didst drown others, they have drowned thee; and those that drowned thee shall in turn be drowned." The following saying shows that Hillel loved study for its own sake, and not for what it brought him: "He who adds not to his learning diminishes it. He who studies not deserves death. But he who uses the 'crown of the Law' for his own ends shall perish." Study, in his view, must be constant and unselfish, and not used for purposes of gain or self-advancement. Moreover, if a man only learns a little and does not continually add to his stock of knowledge, he will soon forget the little he once learnt. "He who makes a name destroys a name" was another of Hillel's maxims. By this he meant that he who "makes a name," and becomes rich and famous, not so much by reason of his learning, but because of his pushfulness and boasting, destroys his name for modesty, humility, and unselfishness.

Aleph Beth backwards.

One day a heathen came to Hillel, and asked in what the Jewish Law consisted. Hillel replied that it was partly written, and part of it had been handed down by word of mouth. The heathen said he believed in the first part, but not in the second. He would, therefore, become a Jew on condition that Hillel taught him only the former and not the latter part of the Law. Hillel agreed to this condition, and commenced to teach him the Hebrew alphabet in the usual way. The second day he taught him the alphabet backwards, reading א as ת, ב as ש, &c. The heathen was puzzled and said: "But yesterday you told me something different." "Yes," replied Hillel, "but did you not rely upon my statement as to which letter was א and which ת?" "Yes," was the answer. "In the same

way," said Hillel, "you must rely on those wise teachers who explain the Law, and whose opinions have been handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth." Hillel thus emphasised the impossibility of understanding the Bible without the help of explanation handed down by the leading men in each generation, and also the necessity of learning from a teacher in whom confidence can be placed.

Appropriate charity.

Hillel's generosity and his love for his fellow-men, which gave rise to his "golden rule," were shown in many ways. His charity would be fitted to the station of life in which a man was placed. He gave a horse one day to a poor man to ride upon. To a man, however, who was once wealthy, but had become reduced in circumstances, he gave, in addition to a horse and carriage, a slave to run in front of the carriage (which was the custom with rich people). Rather than they should be without their accustomed luxuries, which had become necessaries to them, Jewish law provided that, if the funds were forthcoming and the circumstances demanded it, the habits of a man or woman should be taken into consideration in providing relief for their "necessities." Hillel's charity was prompted by his remembrance of the time when he only earned a denar a day in his youth in Jerusalem. He certainly "loved his neighbour," if any one in this world ever did.

Hillel at home.

The same spirit of kindness must have prevailed in Hillel's house. For we are told that one day a poor man came to Hillel's wife asking for something to eat. She was just preparing a meal for her husband and a guest who was to accompany him; but, without a moment's hesitation, she gave the poor man, who seemed so hungry and ill-clad, the food which she was making ready for Hillel and his guest, and commenced to prepare another meal for them. When her husband duly arrived home, and found that the expected meal was not ready, he said to his wife: "How is it, my dear wife, with thy usual skill and punctuality, that our repast is not prepared?" She replied: "It would have been ready for thee, my beloved husband, but this afternoon a poor man came to me, and begged for food. I, therefore, gave him of that which I had prepared for thee, and at once commenced to make ready another meal. I hope that what I have done is pleasing in thine

eyes." Then Hillel, who loved his wife, but loved a kindly action as well, said to her, with a look of pleasure and admiration in his eyes: "Thou hast done aright, my good wife. We can wait for our food, and could have even done without it altogether. I am glad that thou didst not suffer the poor, starving man to go hungry from Hillel's house. May the Lord bless thee!" We are not surprised that Hillel was so pleased, for his wife had been carrying out his own "golden rule" of kindness and charity to others.

Preaching peace.

Hillel was always practising and preaching peace and trust in God. One day, as on approaching his house, he heard a noise as of weeping, he expressed in the words of the Psalmist ("He shall not be afraid of evil tidings"—Psalm cxii. 7) his confidence that the noise could not have come from *his* house, for there everything and everybody were always at peace. His trust in God was so great that, whereas his colleague Shammai began to provide for the Sabbath on the preceding Sunday, Hillel again quoted the Psalmist, saying, "Blessed be the Lord, who *daily* loadeth us with benefits" (Psalm lxviii. 19). Although it was a good thing to be provident and look ahead, said Hillel, it was not necessary to push this too far, for then one would forget altogether about that confidence in God, which was so real a thing to him. "Be of the disciples of Aaron—love peace, and seek to make peace between others, love mankind, and thus lead them to the Law," was one of Hillel's maxims. His successors explained it by saying: "One should love to see peace in Israel, and peace everywhere, as Aaron loved peace, of whom it is written: 'The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with Me in peace and equity, and did turn away many from iniquity' (Mal. ii. 6)."

At the gate of Jerusalem.

Hillel often tried to induce people to study the Law. One day he stood at the gate of Jerusalem, and watched the people as they went to their work. "How much," he asked, "will you earn to-day?" One said, "A denar"; another, "Two denars." "What will you do with the money?" he inquired. "We will provide for the necessities of life," was the reply. "Then," said Hillel, "would you not rather come and make the Torah your

possession, so that you may possess both this world and the future world?" Hillel was never too great or proud to speak to the most ignorant and lowly of the common people in the streets, and he was, in this way, often able to do good.

CHAPTER XXII

STORIES OF THE RABBIS

Hillel (*continued*)

"My humility is my exaltation."

The great teacher was a model of patience, gentleness, and humility, and "Be gentle as Hillel" was a proverb used long afterwards. "My humility is my exaltation; my exaltation is my humility" was one of his sayings. He meant, of course, that the humbler he was the higher and more exalted was he in the sight of God; the higher his position as a scholar and leader of the community, the more necessary was it to show that a man could occupy a high place in society, and yet be modest and humble. If, however, he was haughty and boasted of his scholarship, he would be degraded in the sight of God and man.

A wager.

On one occasion a man had a wager with a friend that he would make Hillel angry. He came to the Rabbi, when he had just entered a bath, crying, "Where is Hillel? where is Hillel?" without giving him any title (which was, of course, very disrespectful). Hillel immediately wrapped himself in a cloak, gave audience to the man, and politely asked what he could do, whereupon his interrupter put to him the following foolish question: "Why have the Babylonians round heads?" (this was an insulting as well as a foolish question, for Hillel was a Babylonian). "An important question, surely," answered Hillel. "The reason is because they have no experienced nurses." The man came again, crying, "Where is Hillel?" "What dost thou want, my son?" said the Rabbi. "I want to know why the Tadmorians have weak eyes?" Hillel answered: "Because they live in a sandy country; the sand flies into their eyes and causes soreness." The man, perceiving Hillel's mildness and good-nature, went away despondent. But, resolving to make another effort

to provoke him, he came again in an hour, calling out: "Where is Hillel? I want Hillel." "What is thy pleasure now?" said the meek Rabbi. "I want to know," replied the man, "why the Africans have broad feet?" "Because," replied the sage, "they live in a marshy land."

The wager lost.

"I would like to ask many more questions," said the man, "but I fear thou wilt be angry." "Fear nothing," said the Rabbi; "ask as many questions as it pleaseth thee, and I will answer them if I can." The man, astonished at Hillel's unruffled temper, and fearing to lose his money, thought that his only chance was to insult him to his face. With this end in view, he said to the Rabbi: "Art thou the Hillel who is styled 'the Prince of the Israelites'?" Hillel replied that this was so. "Well then," said the man, "if that is so, may Israel not produce many persons like thee." "And why not?" replied the sweet-natured Rabbi. "Because," said the stranger, "I have lost 400 zuzim." "Thy money is not entirely lost," said Hillel with a smile, "because it will teach thee to be more prudent in the future, and not to make such foolish wagers. Besides, it is better that thou lose thy money than that Hillel should lose his patience."

A curious condition.

A heathen came to Hillel one day, and told him that he would become a Jew on condition that he was appointed High Priest. With his unfailing gentleness and good-humour Hillel told the heathen that he agreed to the condition, but that it was impossible to fill a post without knowing something of the duties and laws attaching to it. "You will therefore," he said, "have to learn the Jewish Law." The heathen thereupon began to study the Bible. When he came to the passage: "And the stranger that cometh nigh to serve in the tabernacle shall be put to death" (Num. i. 51), he asked Hillel what was meant by the word "stranger." Hillel replied that it included every one who did not belong to the priestly family, even if it were King David. Then the man thought to himself: "If all other Israelites are excluded from exercising priestly duties, how can I become High Priest?" So he gave up his ambitious desire, and said to Hillel humbly: "Beloved master, may blessings come upon thy head, for thou hast brought me under the wings of Heaven."

Teaching self-reliance and unselfishness.

The following further sayings of his illustrate Hillel's whole teaching: "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And being for my own self alone, what am I? And if not now, when then?" He thus taught that man's merit depends on his own good deeds, although at the best he is not likely to achieve all that God expects from him (for "What am I?"). But there is no time to waste, says the Rabbi; do not put off till to-morrow what can be done to-day, for the days of life are short ("If not now, when then?"). And, if a man does not strive after goodness for himself while he is alive, no one can do so for him after he is dead ("If I am not for myself, who will be for me?"). In the troublous times in which he lived the people were divided into parties, each of which proclaimed religious and political doctrines of a different character, and gave expression to various shades of opinion, often breaking out into open hostility. Between these shades of opinion Hillel stood like a rock in the midst of a tempest, unmoved by passion, and untouched by all the party influences that surrounded him. It was then that there fell from his lips the golden words of wisdom: "In a place where there are no good men, do thou endeavour to be a man." A wise man himself, we are not surprised that one of Hillel's favourite sayings was, "Happy is he that findeth wisdom." "Learn where there are teachers, and teach where there are learners" was a motto for all teachers and pupils in all ages. "Judge not thy neighbour till thou art in his place" was a lesson in charity of judgment.

A holy duty.

One day Hillel's pupils, at the close of his lecture, went a part of their journey home with him. It was part of a Jewish student's course of study in those days to accompany his teacher everywhere, and watch closely, not only his words, but his ways, and, indeed, his every act; for a Rabbi was supposed to take a pride in doing nothing without deliberation. The pupils asked Hillel where he was going. "I am going to perform a holy duty," he replied. "Tell us, Master," they then asked, "what this duty is." "I am about to bathe myself in the bath-house," said Hillel. Full of curiosity, they then said to him: "Is that a religious duty?" "Yes, indeed," was Hillel's reply. "If the statues of the kings, which are placed in the

theatre and circus, must be kept clean and washed by a man who is specially appointed and paid to do this work, how much more should I, who have been created in the image of God, keep my body clean?" Cleanliness of body and thought was in Hillel's time, as it is to-day, an important part of the Jewish religion.

An important guest.

Then Hillel went on to say: "I must hurry along now because I have to attend to a guest in my house." The pupils were again curious and asked: "Hast thou, then, every day a guest in thy house?" Hillel replied: "My soul is my guest. For to-day it is here; to-morrow it may no longer be with me. I therefore wish, while there is still time, to look after it by study and prayer and good actions. But I cannot attend to my guest unless I also care for myself, and so, if I wish to have a clear brain and a good heart, I must refresh my body by a bath and a meal." The Romans expressed the idea that health of body and mind go very much together in a similar way by the phrase: "Mens sana in corpore sano."

Putting the Law into order.

Apart, however, from his noble character, Hillel will always be remembered as having done a great deal to put the traditional law as handed down by the Rabbis into proper order. He commenced the work of collecting and arranging it, and his knowledge of it was so great that his opinion on any difficult point was accepted almost without question. He framed rules which made it possible to explain the existing laws, and he was always on the side of those who wished to make them reasonable. He would abide by the spirit of the Law, when strict adherence to its very letter would mean unreasonable severity or inconvenience. Hillel's knowledge was not, however, confined to the Law. It was said that there was no language that he and his disciples did not know, and he was familiar (as the story tells of Solomon) with the talk of the mountains, the valleys, and the trees, of the beasts and of the fields. It was in this picturesque way that the Rabbis spoke when they meant that a man was conversant with nature study.

Reasonable rules.

Hillel's rules, by which the Bible laws were to be explained, partly healed the differences between the Pharisees and Sadducees. The latter could no longer say that the traditional law which had been handed down was something independent of the Bible, as the connection between

the explanation and the text was now made clear for all, and according to rules which every one could understand. One example of Hillel's explanations will show the nature of his teaching. There was a law (in Deut. xv. 1–2) that in every seven years creditors should make their debtors a present of the money owing to them. "At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release. And this is the manner of the release: every creditor that lendeth aught unto his neighbour shall release it; he shall not exact it of his neighbour, or of his brother; because it is called 'the Lord's release.'" At this time the rule pressed rather hardly on both the lenders of money and on the poor, as people would not lend any money at all when the seventh year approached. This did not matter so much when Palestine was an agricultural country, and no money was required. But now that the land was becoming more the centre of commerce, and loans were frequent, the law became a hardship. Hillel, therefore, arranged that the lender should transfer his claim to the Beth Din. In this way the lender gave up his debt, as the law required, but he in fact was still able to recover his money if he wished. For, by handing the debt over to the Beth Din, it was considered that the money was now owing to God, and that it was a matter of honour (as well as of law) for the borrower to repay it as soon as he could. The arrangement was called a *prosbul*.

The "schools" of Hillel and Shammai.

Hillel's chief colleague on the Sanhedrin was named Shammai. After a time both Hillel and Shammai had followers, and each of these tried to imitate his master. Thus, the Hillelites were, like the founder of their school, quiet, peace-loving men, accommodating themselves to varying circumstances and times. They desired to make the Law practical and reasonable, and suited to the requirements of everyday life, their aim being to bring man nearer to his God and his neighbour. The Shammaites, on the other hand, were stern and severe in their decisions, like their master, although they received every one in a cheerful manner. To them it seemed impossible to be too strict in religious regulations. And this was why the Hillelites were followed in all their actions, except in three cases, and in these the Shammaites adopted the milder and more reasonable course. In the tumultuous and unsettled times

that followed, the students of the Law could not devote mind and time to study fully and deeply enough. In earlier times every now and then matters in dispute were settled by national assemblies, but in the warlike period to which we are now referring such congresses were impossible. And so it came about that the differences increased till it was said that there were two Laws instead of one—one laid down by the school of Hillel, and one established by the school of Shammai.

How the "Shema" may be said.

Some of Shammai's sayings have also come down to us, and the following is one: "Have a fixed period for the study of the Law; promise little and do much, and receive every one with a cheerful countenance." Two instances of the disputes between the two schools of Hillel and Shammai may serve as typical of them all. A discussion arose as to how the *Shema* should be recited. The disciples of Shammai held that in the evening it was proper to say the *Shema* lying down, and in the morning standing up, so that the words of the command: "And thou shalt talk of them . . . when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" could be literally fulfilled. But the school of Hillel said: "No, *saying* the *Shema* is the important thing. It does not matter so much in what attitude a man is when he says it, so long as he *does* recite it, and prays to God earnestly. Even a workman picking fruit on the top of a tree may put down his basket, and a bricklayer may lay down his bricks on the scaffolding, and say: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One!'" The school of Shammai said: "The Law should be imparted preferably to men of wisdom, of modesty, of good family, and of some independence." The school of Hillel, on the other hand, said: "Let it be imparted to all men: for there were many transgressors in Israel who were encouraged to study the Law, and who became the parents of righteous, holy, and virtuous men." The followers of Hillel in this way adopted a broader view of life, and did not wish to confine instruction to those who were already learned or rich.

Hillel's death.

Hillel's death was received by the whole nation with mourning, and at his graveside the people cried: "O pious, O gentle one, O worthy follower of Ezra!" Hillel's gentle, unselfish, noble life may well introduce to us the "Heroes of the Talmud." Not only has his teaching enriched

Jewish literature, but many people think that it has influenced other religions as well, and thus has had a far-reaching effect on the history of mankind. Hillel died nearly two thousand years ago. Eloquent as was his teaching, his life was even more so, and the record of his sublime character will remain an example for ever.

CHAPTER XXIII

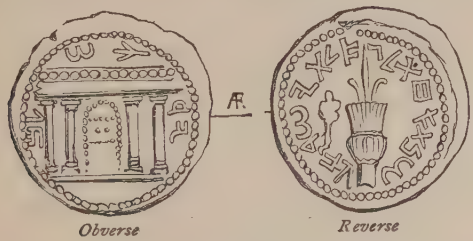
10 B.C.–90 C.E.

STORIES OF THE RABBIS

II. Jochanan Ben Zakkai. יוֹחָנָן בֶּן זַכַּאי

THE Talmud might never have been put together if it had not been for the courage and foresight of Rabban Jochanan ben Zakkai, who was one of the first of a large number of famous men who have been called *Tannaim* (or "reciters" of the Mishna), most of whom lived and taught after the destruction of the Temple. Rabban Jochanan

The "father of wisdom."



Obverse *Reverse*

COIN STRUCK AFTER THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

Obverse:—Hebrew word "Jerusalem," with figure of one of the Gates of the Temple. *Reverse:*—Hebrew words: "First year of the captivity of Israel." An *Ethrog* and *Lulab*.

was the youngest of Hillel's pupils. But, although he was only a young man at the time of Hillel's death, his famous master had prophesied that he would be the greatest of them all. For he was the "father of wisdom" and "the father of coming generations."

In the last struggle of Judea against Rome Rabban Jochanan, from his seat in the open street, under the shadow of the Temple, had advised his people not to continue the hopeless contest. When he saw, however, what

Rabban Jochanan's advice.

the end was likely to be, he resolved that, come what might, the religion and Law of the Jews should not perish even if the Temple were destroyed and Judea laid waste. Whilst the various parties in Jerusalem were quarrelling, and the Romans were pressing hard upon the city, Rabban Jochanan made up his mind to leave Jerusalem and try to establish a school elsewhere, where the Law could be taught and preserved.

He escapes in a coffin.

He sent a message to the Roman camp, by means of a piece of paper tied to an arrow, that he was about to escape from Jerusalem, and he was afterwards carried by his pupils in a coffin outside the city to the enemy's lines. He had previously spread a report that he was ill, so that the report of his death did not come altogether as a surprise. At the gate of Jerusalem the guards wanted to test whether Rabban Jochanan was really dead, because he would not have been allowed to leave the city if they thought he was still alive. They therefore asked the pupils who were carrying the coffin to stab the body and shake the coffin. The pupils refused to do this, however, saying it was disrespectful for them so to act towards their dead master. When he arrived at the Roman camp, Rabban Jochanan emerged from his coffin and asked to see Vespasian, the Roman general.

Vespasian angry.

He was then brought before Vespasian, and said: "Hail, O Emperor! Peace be with thee, O King!" The General replied, angrily: "You deserve to be killed twice, for you are making fun of me and you are telling a lie. You know that I am not Emperor, for there is an Emperor at Rome. But, if I am Emperor, as you say, why have you not come to me before?" "With regard to thy first point," replied Rabban Jochanan, "that thou art not Emperor, in truth thou art an Emperor. It is said in the Bible that 'Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one' (Isaiah x. 34). 'Lebanon' means the Temple, and the 'mighty one' is an Emperor. As I know that Jerusalem is certain to fall into thy hands, it is clear that thou must be the Roman Emperor. With regard to the question, why I have not come to see thee before, the revolutionaries among us have not permitted me to do so."

Jochanan's three requests.

A messenger at this moment came to Vespasian with the news that the Emperor had died, and that he had been

VESPASIAN

(Bust in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence)

proclaimed in his stead ruler of the Roman Empire. The new Emperor then said to Rabban Jochanan: "Since you are so very wise, why did you not succeed with the people of Jerusalem, and come to me before?" "Have I not given thee the answer?" replied Jochanan. "There were in the city wicked people, who would not listen to me." "I have also answered your answer," said Vespasian. "But I am going back to Rome to be crowned Emperor, and I shall send another general in my place. Ask some favour of me before I go, and I will grant it." Jochanan replied by making three requests: "Save the

Obverse *Reverse*

COIN ISSUED UNDER THE ROMAN EMPEROR VESPASIAN

Obverse:—Greek words with name of the Emperor. Head of Vespasian, laureated. *Reverse*:—Deity holding ears of corn.

vineyard of Jabneh and its wise men from destruction. Spare the family of Rabban Gamliel. Give me a doctor who will heal Rabbi Zadok."

Why Jochanan went to Jabneh.

Jabneh was a city on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, where a small school already existed. Rabban Jochanan wished to enlarge this, and thus preserve Judaism by teaching the Law, whatever might be the fate of Jerusalem and its Temple. Rabban Jochanan's school at Jabneh was ever afterwards called "the Vineyard of Jabneh," the "wine" produced there being the wise words of the sages, who gathered the "grapes" containing the words of the Law. Rabban Gamliel was a member of the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem. Jochanan felt that, if Gamliel and his family were spared at the approaching capture of the city, this would help to preserve the Sanhedrin from destruction as well. Rabbi Zadok was a man who was said to have fasted for forty years, and prayed for the preservation of

Jerusalem and the Temple: he had naturally become very ill. Jochanan, with that sympathy and charity which were part of the lives of all the Rabbis of the Talmud, thought that it would be an act of kindness to procure a doctor to cure this poor man, and succeeded in doing so. The Roman general, not suspecting that the founding of a school in the unimportant town of Jabneh, far away from Jerusalem, would be the means of preserving Judaism for all time, readily consented to Jochanan's modest requests. To Jabneh, therefore, the Rabbi went, and gathered round him a number of sages and pupils. The school became the centre for learning in Palestine, in the same way as Jerusalem had been. Sittings of the Sanhedrin took place there, and the teaching of the Law was continued as of old.

A beautiful motto.

The beautiful motto of the teachers of Jabneh in later years is a fitting monument to the humble lives and teachings of Hillel and his pupil, Rabban Jochanan, the founder of the school. "I am the creature of God," they said, "and so is my fellow-man; my calling is in the town, and his in the fields; I go early to my work and he to his; he does not boast of his labour nor I of mine; and if thou wouldst say, 'I accomplish great things, and he little things,' we have learnt that, whether a man accomplish great things or small, his reward is the same if only his heart be set upon Heaven."

If all the sky became parchment!

Rabban Jochanan was fond of praising his great teacher Hillel, and he said that if all the sky became parchment, all the trees pens, all the seas ink, and all men scribes, this would not be sufficient to describe the knowledge that he had learnt from his teacher. But, even with all the assistance and teaching Hillel had given him, he had only taken from that wise man as much as a fly, dipping its body into the ocean, took from the water contained in it.

A good heart.

One day he asked his five principal pupils what they thought was most useful to a man throughout life. One of them said, "A good eye"; another, "A good friend"; a third, "A good neighbour"; a fourth, "One who has foresight." But the answer which pleased him most was that of his favourite disciple, Eleazar ben Arach, who replied that "a good heart" was the most important thing one could possess, for in this all the other things his colleagues had mentioned were included. A man with a good heart

would be a good friend, a good neighbour, &c. Rabban Jochanan must himself have had the good heart which he recommended to his pupils. For he was fond of saying: "It is as pleasing in God's sight to be kind and hospitable to strangers as to rise up early to study His law"—because it was in fact putting God's law into practice. Another saying of his was: "He who is always busy in acts of kindness towards his fellow-creatures is forgiven his sins." We thus see that Hillel's "golden rule" of kindness and charity, "Do not unto others what thou wouldst not have done unto thyself," was reflected in the teachings of his successors.

A new kind of sacrifice.

The sacrifices of the Temple were gone, but Rabban Jochanan comforted his people in Jabneh by telling them that "righteousness exalteth a nation" (Prov. xiv. 34), and that in future loving-kindness and charity were to be their sin-offering. To a Rabbi, who was weeping amid the ruins of the Temple, Jochanan said: "My son, be not grieved, for we have an atonement as effectual as that of the Temple." "And what is that?" asked the other. "Righteousness!" was Rabban Jochanan's reply. "For hath not the Prophet said: 'I desired mercy and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings' (Hosea vi. 6)?" This was Rabban Jochanan's inspiring answer to the weeping and lamentation for the burnt Temple and the captured city. The Jewish people now had a mission to perform in the world. Their sacrifices were to be sacrifices of self for their faith; their offerings were to be offerings of charity and righteousness among the peoples of the world.

CHAPTER XXIV

STORIES OF THE RABBIS

JOCHANAN BEN ZAKKAI (*continued*)

"Salt your money with charity!"

SOMETIMES Jochanan would remind the people that they themselves were partly to blame for their troubles. One day, during the siege of Jerusalem, he saw a young Jewess, whose father had been a very rich man, picking up grains of barley dropped in the roadway by the horses as they ate, in order to appease her hunger. As soon as she espied the Rabbi, she veiled herself with her hair, and accosted him thus: "O Rabbi! assist me." "Whose daughter art thou, my child?" asked the Rabbi. She replied: "The daughter of Nicodemus ben Guryon." "But what has become of thy father's fortune?" asked Rabban Jochanan. "Ah!" said she, "is it not a saying in Jerusalem, 'Salt thy money with charity' (that is to say, to preserve one's money one must diminish it by devoting part of it to charity)? As my father did not spend sufficient in charity, it all vanished." "And what has become of all the money thou hadst as a dowry from thy father-in-law?" inquired the Rabbi. "Alas!" said the young woman, "one sum devoured the other. His money was also lost through my father."

A generous dowry.

"Rabbi," she went on, "dost thou recollect signing my marriage contract?" "Yes," he said, turning to his disciples, "I well remember having signed it; it told of a million golden denarii from her father, besides a goodly sum from her father-in-law. It is related of her father that, when he went from his house to the academy, the road was carpeted with Milesian cloth, and after he had passed over it poor people rolled it up and took it away. It might be said that he did this in order to gratify his vanity. But, even if he did this really to benefit the poor, it was

not enough for him to give, for he was exceedingly rich; and the saying is, 'According to the strength of the camel should be the weight of its burden.'" Speaking thus, Rabban Jochanan wept. "Blessed art thou, O Israel," he said, "when thou doest the will of the Almighty, for then no nation can rule over thee. But, when thou doest not the will of God, He delivereth thee over to a strange nation; and not only so, but He actually maketh thee dependent upon the very beasts."

The moral of the grains of barley.

Rabban Jochanan used this incident as a text for an address to the people, blaming them for their past neglect. "You did not wish," he said, "to submit to God; hence you are made subject to foreign peoples. You did not pay God the holy tax of half a shekel for each person; now you pay fifteen to the government of your enemies. You did not wish to repair the roads and streets for the festivals; you must now repair the watch-towers and forts on the roadside by which your oppressors keep guard over you. And in you is fulfilled the prophecy: 'Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness and with gladness of heart, by reason of the abundance of all things, therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies, which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things' (Deut. xxviii. 47–48)."

An observant slave.

The story is told of Rabban Jochanan that he was travelling once with two Jewish slaves, and in the course of the journey overheard one saying to the other: "There is a camel ahead of us. I have not seen it, but it is blind of one eye, and is laden with two skin bottles, one of which contains oil, and the other wine. There are two drivers, one of whom is an Israelite, and the other a Gentile." The Rabbi asked how he knew this. The slave answered: "Although I have not seen what I have described, yet I know the camel is blind in one eye, because the grass is cropped on only one side of the track. The wine, which the travellers must have carried, is soaked into the earth on the right, and the oil has trickled down, and can be seen on the left. One of the drivers, who is, I think, an Israelite, has obeyed the rule to turn aside from the path, and throw away water that is not needed. The other has not even left the road for the purpose.

Using one's eyes.

Upon this, Rabban Jochanan pressed forward, in order to see if the slave's statement was correct. On finding it was true in every respect, he returned, and, after complimenting the slave on his shrewdness, at once gave him his liberty. The Rabbi afterwards used to tell the story in advising his pupils always to be observant, both in the country and the town—to note the beautiful flowers, the grand trees, and the sweet-singing birds of the country, and the fine buildings and other things of interest to be found in cities. In other words, he wanted the boys and girls of his day to admire the beautiful things they saw around them, and to use that wonderful part of their bodies—their eyes—to the best possible advantage.

Humility and politeness.

Rabban Jochanan ben Zakkai imitated his teacher Hillel in teaching the virtue of humility. One of his mottoes was: "If thou hast learned much of the Torah, do not take credit for it, for this was the purpose for which thou wast created." It was said of him, too, that, so careful was he not to waste a moment of his life, he never spoke an idle word; he did not walk four yards without thinking about the Torah and without his tephillin; no one ever entered the House of Learning before him; and he was always the last to leave. He was polite, too, for it was said of him that no man ever greeted him first, not even a stranger in the market-place.

Peace.

Although he was far away from Jerusalem, where his advice had not been heeded, Rabban Jochanan continued to preach peace between all men. "If," he said, "God commanded that no iron should be employed over the stones of the altar, which can neither see, nor hear, nor speak, because they are intended to procure peace between Israel and their Father in Heaven, how much more shall God's blessing be upon every one who makes peace between man and his wife, family and family, city and city, nation and nation, kingdom and kingdom?"

A King and his treasures.

The Rabbi was very much grieved when he lost his son, who was only eighteen years old. His pupils came to condole with him. One of them spoke of the death of Abel and Adam's grief; another, of the unhappiness and sufferings of Job; a third, of the consolation of Aaron when his two sons died on the same day; a fourth, of the sorrow of David at the death of his child. But these did not

soothe him. "How should the sufferings of others make *my* loss any the less?" he said. Then one of his pupils comforted him by telling him the following parable: A King once had some treasure entrusted to him for safe-keeping, and he was very much worried, whilst the treasure was in his possession, lest any of it should be stolen or injured. He was, accordingly, much relieved to find, when the time came for restoring the treasure to the owner, that it was uninjured. "Should not you rejoice too," said the pupil to the old Rabbi, "that *your* treasure was in such perfect condition when you had to return it—that your son, by means of your teaching and example, was such a noble son of Israel, when he was summoned by his Maker?" And so the Rabbi was comforted in his grief by this touching description of his loss.

A parting blessing.

Rabban Jochanan died, it is said, at the advanced age of one hundred years. When he was on his death-bed, his pupils asked for a blessing. Rabban Jochanan replied by saying: "May it be God's will that the fear of Heaven be as strong in you as the fear of man!" "What!" said his pupils, "do you desire that we should not fear God more than man?" "I should be well content," answered the wise old Rabbi, "if you showed by your actions that you feared Him as much. If we are about to do wrong, do we not often look around us to make sure we are alone, and, if any one is likely to see us, do we not desist? Show then the same fear of God, who always sees."

The meaning of tears.

As his pupils approached his bedside, Rabban Jochanan broke into tears. His pupils asked him why he cried. "If I were to appear," he said, "before a King of flesh and blood, before a King who is here to-day and to-morrow in the grave, whose anger, if he is angry with me, is no permanent anger, and whose chains, if he put me in chains, are no everlasting chains, and whose death, if he kills me, is no eternal death, a King who can be persuaded with words and bribed with gold—before such a man I would weep. And now, when I am about to appear before the King of Kings, the Holy One—blessed be He!—who lives and remains for ever in all eternity, whom I cannot persuade with words or bribe with gold, shall I not then weep?"

Rabban Jochanan's task.

No man did more than Rabban Jochanan ben Zakkai to make it possible for Israel, broken in spirit and sad at heart, with her country laid waste and her Sanctuary destroyed, to rise again from "the Vineyard of Jabneh," and offer her sacrifice of loving-kindness and charity to the world.

CHAPTER XXV

40–130 C.E.

STORIES OF THE RABBIS

III. Joshua Ben Chananya. יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־חֲנַנְיָא

At Synagogue in a cradle.

Rabbi Joshua ben Chananya was one of the most prominent of the Rabbis who lived during the fifty years after the destruction of the Temple. He was a Levite, and had served in the Temple as one of the choristers in the Sanctuary. His mother had intended him from his birth for a life of study, and she carried her child in his cradle into the Synagogue, so that his ears might become accustomed to the sound of the words of the Torah. Joshua was one of the five principal disciples of Rabban Jochanan ben Zakkai, and was one of the two pupils who bore their master in the coffin out of Jerusalem into the Roman camp during the siege.

Too much grief.

He followed the humble occupations of a maker of needles and charcoal-burner, but notwithstanding this lowly calling he was skilled in science, and was an astronomer. When the Temple was destroyed, he tried to check an undue display of grief on the part of the people, some of whom refused to eat meat or drink wine because these were no longer used in the Temple sacrifices. But Joshua pointed out that, on the same principle, they should not eat figs or grapes, since the first-fruits were no longer offered; or even bread and water, as the festival of the drawing of the water had been discontinued, and the Temple showbread was no longer displayed. Their self-denial, he told them, was unnecessary, and, if it unfitted them for their daily duties, it was wrong. For then their self-denial would become selfishness, as they would be so much absorbed in their own grief that they could not

do their duty to others. His mild and temperate nature caused Rabbi Joshua to be opposed to all exaggerations and extremes of this kind, and he bitterly opposed the severe regulations of the school of Shammai, saying on one occasion that the latter had "overstepped" the boundary of what reasonable people could carry out.

"Sly sinners."

Rabbi Joshua adopted as one of his mottoes, "Be not righteous over-much" (Eccles. vii. 16), and he had great contempt for hypocrites, and people whom he called "sly sinners"—that is to say, people who pretended to be very pious, but who were really wicked. "If people wish to be happy," Rabbi Joshua said, "they must possess the qualities of temperance and love of mankind." He taught the importance of being kind and attentive to one's fellows, and he impressed upon his pupils the lessons that hypocrisy is one of the greatest sins condemned by God and man, and that there is nothing to be compared with straightforwardness, honesty, and the striving with a *true* heart to help others.

Love everyone.

One of Rabbi Joshua's sayings was: "An envious eye, evil thoughts, and hatred of his fellow-beings drive a man out of the world," meaning that a man who possessed these undesirable qualities was not fit to live. One of the Rabbi's successors afterwards compared the "evil thoughts" of which he spoke to a piece of iron which is placed in the fire: so long as it is there, and in a molten state, various vessels can be formed out of it; so long, too, as evil thoughts exist in the mind, wrong actions may be committed. "Hatred of fellow beings" was explained as follows: "One should not say, 'Love the sages, but hate the disciples;' or 'Love the disciples, and hate the common people;' but 'Love *everyone* except those that are wicked,' as it is said: 'But thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself' (Lev. xix. 18); and: 'If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink' (Prov. xxv. 21)."

Shorter prayers.

His moderation extended to the saying of the daily prayers, and he allowed people to use an abstract of the eighteen Benedictions (*Shemoné Esré*) in certain circumstances. If, for instance, a person was in a place of danger, and was not able to set his mind to prayer, Rabbi Joshua permitted him to offer a shorter prayer than the one usually

provided. Recognising that it was impossible for working men to spend much time in studying the Torah, Rabbi Joshua also said that "he who repeats two sentences in the morning and two in the evening, but is engaged in his ordinary occupation for the rest of the day, is reckoned as if he had fulfilled the teaching of the whole Law."

Rabban Gamliel deposed.

Early in his career Rabbi Joshua had a dispute with Rabban Gamliel, who was Head of the Beth Din. Joshua gave way, as Gamliel was superior to him in position. But the latter, wishing to show his resentment at the occurrence, bade him stand up in the Beth Din "that the people may know that you have expressed an opinion contrary to mine." This insult made the people so angry that they decided to dismiss Rabban Gamliel. A discussion then arose as to who should succeed him. They could not appoint Rabbi Joshua, as he was one of the parties to the dispute. Rabbi Akiba, too, could not be selected, as he was then unmarried. Finally they decided to appoint Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah, because he was a rich man, was tenth in descent from Ezra, and was otherwise a fit and proper person for the post. The only difficulty was that Eleazar was only eighteen years old. But that night, so the story runs, several rows of white hairs grew on his head, and thus Rabbi Eleazar was able to sit as President of the Beth Din.

The quarrel healed.

It was not long, however, before Rabban Gamliel tried to make peace between himself and Rabbi Joshua. Accordingly he went one day to Joshua's house. He did not, however, commence his conversation very happily, for he made some rude remark about the dirty, black walls of the house, a condition brought about by Joshua's occupation of charcoal-burner. Rabbi Joshua replied: "Woe to the generation whose leader is so indifferent that he does not understand what are the troubles of those who have to earn their living." Gamliel, who was a rich man, was touched by this reply of Rabbi Joshua, and said: "I have sinned against thee. Pardon me for the sake of thy father." Joshua was only too ready to forgive his old friend; they kissed each other, and the quarrel was over. The people then wished to restore Rabban Gamliel, who, after all, was the cleverest man of his time, to his position. Moreover, though he was somewhat disdainful and high-

handed in his leadership, yet he was a good and worthy man. They could not, however, dismiss Rabbi Eleazar. Finally they devised a compromise: Gamliel was to preside three weeks and Eleazar one week out of every four.

The nearest way.

Rabbi Joshua seldom allowed people to get the better of him in argument or in wit. The only exceptions are mentioned by Joshua himself. "No person," he said, "ever conquered me in wit except two little boys, a little girl, and a widow. Once, on my travels, I came near a town, where the road separated to the right and the left. Not knowing which to take, I inquired of a little boy which of the two led to the town. 'Both,' replied he, 'but that to the right is short and long; that to the left is long and short.' The boy then ran away out of reach, leaving me puzzled which to take. I chose the road on the right, but had not advanced far when my progress was stopped by a number of hedges and gardens. Being unable to proceed, I returned, and, finding the little fellow again, I asked him how he could be so unkind as to misdirect a stranger. 'I did not misdirect thee,' replied the boy. 'This road is the shorter, but still the longer on account of the many obstructions. The other road is, indeed, less direct; but it is nevertheless the shorter, being a public road.' I admired the lad's wit, and went on."

Curiosity repressed.

"On arriving in the city one day," continued the Rabbi, "I met another little boy, carrying a covered dish. 'What hast thou in that dish, child?' I asked. 'My mother would not have covered it, master, if she had been willing that its contents should be known,' replied the little fellow, with rare good sense."

A kind and witty girl.

"Another time, during my travels," Rabbi Joshua went on, "I came near a well, where a young girl was drawing water. Being very thirsty, I asked for a draught. She handed me the pitcher. 'Drink,' said she, 'and when thou hast done, I will draw some for the beast on which thou ridest.' I quenched my thirst, and the good girl gave some to the poor animal. As I departed, I said: 'Daughter of Israel, thou hast imitated the virtuous example of our good mother Rebeccah.' 'Rabbi,' said the young girl, with a smile that indicated the most kindly feelings, and showed that the reply was a mere

playful retort, 'if I have imitated the example of Rebeccah, thou hast not imitated that of the faithful Eliezer' [of whom the Bible said, 'The man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight, of gold' (Gen. xxiv. 22)]. 'Kind maiden,' said I, 'thou possessest already more beautiful ornaments than the most faithful servant can bestow—wit, common sense, and good nature. May the Lord continue to bless thee!'"

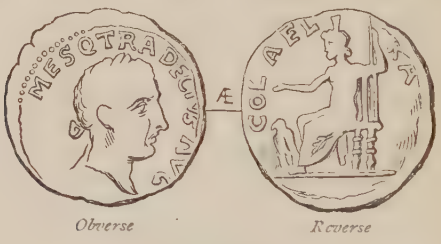
Rabbi Joshua rebuked by a widow.

"I happened once to take up my lodging at the abode of a widow. She prepared something for my dinner, which she placed before me. Being very hungry, I ate the whole, without leaving something, as was the custom, for the servants. The next day I did the same. On the third day my hostess, wishing to inform me that I had not acted aright, so over-seasoned the dish she had prepared for me that it was impossible to eat it. Ignorant of what had been done, I began to eat. But, finding the food so salty, I laid down the spoon, and made my repast on bread. 'Why eatest thou not?' said my hostess. 'Because I am not hungry,' answered I. 'If that is so, why eatest thou the bread?' 'But,' continued she, with a smile full of meaning, 'I can perhaps guess thy motive. Thou leavest this for the poor servants, whom thou didst yesterday and the day before deprive of their due. Is it not so, Rabbi?' I was humbled, and acknowledged my fault."

Wisdom in an ugly frame.

Rabbi Joshua was one of those men whose minds are far more beautiful than their bodies. His occupation often made him look very dirty; his complexion was naturally dark; and he was so plain as almost to frighten children. Yet his great learning, wit, and wisdom procured him not only the love and respect of the people, but even the favour of the Emperor Hadrian at Rome. He was sometimes at the Court, and one of the Princesses chaffed him on one occasion on his want of beauty. "How comes it," she said, "that such glorious wisdom is enclosed in so mean a vessel?" The Rabbi was by no means dismayed by this rude question, and asked the Princess to tell him in what kind of vessel her father kept his wine. "Why, in earthen vessels, to be sure," replied the Princess. "Oh!" exclaimed the witty Rabbi, "that

is what ordinary people do. An Emperor's wine ought to be kept in more precious vessels." "And what kind do you recommend?" she asked. "Silver and gold, of course," replied Joshua. The Princess, thinking he was in earnest, ordered a quantity of wine to be emptied out



Obverse *Reverse*

COIN OF TRAJAN

Obverse: -Latin words with name of Trajan, and his bust.
Reverse:—Jupiter with an eagle at his feet.

of the earthen jars into gold and silver vessels. But, to her great surprise, she found it became in a very short time flat and unfit to drink. "Very fine advice, indeed, Rabbi Joshua, hast thou given me," said the Princess the next time she saw him. "Dost thou know that the wine is sour and spoiled?" "Thou art then convinced," replied the Rabbi, "that wine keeps best in plain and mean vessels. It is even so with wisdom."

HADRIAN

From a bust found at Antium

(Museum of the Capitol)

CHAPTER XXVI

STORIES OF THE RABBIS

Joshua ben Chananya (*continued*)

The Emperor Hadrian rebuked.

At the time of the Roman Emperor Hadrian, Rabbi Joshua was the acknowledged leader of the Jewish people, and the Emperor often received him in Rome. One day Hadrian said to the Rabbi: "I am better than your Master, Moses, for I am living and he is dead; as the saying goes, 'A living dog is better than a dead lion.'" Rabbi Joshua replied by asking Hadrian, "Can you compel the inhabitants of the surrounding villages not to kindle fires for the space of three days?" The Emperor told him that nothing was easier, and he immediately gave the order. The first night, Rabbi Joshua led the Emperor on to the terrace of the palace. They saw smoke rising from one of the houses, and Joshua observed to Hadrian: "See! Even during your lifetime you are not obeyed. Moses commanded, however, 'Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the Sabbath day' (Exod. xxxv. 3), and he is still obeyed, so long after his death. How, then, are you better than he?"

One of God's ambassadors.

On another occasion the Emperor said to Rabbi Joshua in a scoffing tone: "Show me this God, of whom you talk so much. I don't believe He exists at all." "Raise your eyes to the sky," replied the Rabbi, "and I will first show you one of His ambassadors." The Emperor raised his eyes. But, at this moment, the sun poured its rays upon the earth, and the dazzling light soon caused Hadrian to cast his eyes downwards. Thereupon Rabbi Joshua said to him: "What! Would you see the Master, when you have not the power to look one of His servants in the face?"

A banquet to God.

Hadrian one day suddenly announced to Joshua his intention of giving a banquet to God. Rabbi Joshua said to him: "But, your Majesty, with all your riches, you will not be able to carry out your desire, for the members of God's Court are very numerous, even as the stars of Heaven and the sand on the sea-shore." Hadrian persisted, however, in his intention, and Joshua then told the Emperor that he ought to prepare the banquet on the sea-shore, so that the sea, one of God's most powerful servants, might partake of it. Hadrian accordingly pre-

Obverse *Reverse*

COINS STRUCK BY HADRIAN AT ROME

Obverse:—Latin words with name of Hadrian, and his bust. *Reverse*:—Hadrian standing to the right before a female (Judea) who holds a box; between them a burning altar; on either side of the female a child holding a palm; behind the altar a bull.

pared a repast for thousands of people. The tables were filled with the most costly dishes and the most expensive and luxurious food. But, as Joshua knew would happen, the sea swept the whole banquet away, and it was only then that the Roman Emperor realised how foolish and impossible was his desire, for the sea was but one of God's servants who had been invited to the banquet, and a few waves of the mighty ocean had sufficed to destroy the luxurious feast.

A notable convert.

Onkelos, or Aquila, the nephew of Hadrian, being anxious to become a Jew, and yet being afraid of his uncle, told Hadrian that he wished to embark on a certain enterprise. When Hadrian offered him some money, he refused to accept it, but said that he wanted instead his uncle's advice, as he was inexperienced in the ways of the world. "Purchase goods," replied Hadrian, "which

do not at present command a high price, and are not favourites in the market, but for which there is reason to believe a demand at higher prices will eventually arise." Aquila betook himself to Palestine, and gave himself up to study. Rabbi Joshua helped him with his studies, and generally befriended him.

A good bargain.

On his return home, he again visited his uncle Hadrian. The Emperor, noticing that his nephew did not look as well as was his wont, inquired whether he had met with any losses in his new enterprise, or had been injured in any way. "I have met with no loss of money," said Aquila, "and, as your nephew, I am not likely to be hurt by any one." Being further pressed as to the reason for his poor looks, Aquila told his uncle they were due to his excessive studies. "And who told you to do such a thing?" asked Hadrian. "I acted on your advice," replied Aquila. "I have acquired a thing that stands at a low price just now, but will eventually rise in value. I found no nation in such low esteem, and so sure to rise in value, as Israel." Aquila will be remembered not only as one of the most notable converts to Judaism of whom we have record, but as the translator of the Bible into Greek. For this purpose he is said to have had assistance from Rabbi Joshua and other Rabbis.

The Emperor's dream.

One day the Emperor said to Rabbi Joshua: "You all boast you are very clever. See if you can tell me what I am going to dream about to-night." The Rabbi replied: "You will dream that the Parthians have conquered your country and taken you captive, and made you a driver of pigs with a golden staff." Hadrian, as it happened, was very much afraid of the Parthians, because they had raided the eastern borders of the Roman Empire and were the only people who had not been overcome by the Romans. What Rabbi Joshua had told him, therefore, weighed upon his mind, and he thought about the matter all day. People often dream at night about things they have been thinking about during the day, and the Emperor Hadrian thus dreamt about the Parthians when he fell asleep at night, just as Joshua had foretold.

On the side of peace.

When the people wished to rebuild the Temple, and desired again to resist the Romans, even by taking up arms once more against them, Rabbi Joshua ben Chananya

threw in his lot on the side of peace, and pointed out how foolish it would be to try to oppose the Romans. It was far better, he said, to be content with what they still possessed; otherwise, they might lose that. To illustrate his views he told them the following fable:—

The lion and the crane.

A lion, while devouring his prey, accidentally caught a bone in his throat. After many endeavours to remove it, he offered a great reward to any one of his numerous subjects who would relieve his mighty Majesty of his pain. Few animals ventured to undertake the operation. At last, however, the crane offered his services. They were joyfully accepted. The feathered physician put his long neck in the lion's throat, took hold of the bone with his long bill, extracted it, to the astonishment of all the bystanders, and then demanded the promised reward. "A reward, indeed!" said the lion contemptuously. "Is it not sufficient reward for thee to have permitted thy ugly neck to escape my mighty jaws, and askest thou now for a still further reward?" The crane thought this argument, if not convincing, very powerful, and went his way.

The moral of the fable.

"The moral of this fable," said Rabbi Joshua to the people, "is simple enough. Remember, dear brethren, you are under foreign rule. Recollect your past sufferings, and consider yourselves lucky that you enjoy the comparative ease and peace you have at present. At all events, do not provoke, by vain and useless resistance, the mighty power of the Emperor" (Hadrian, who, like the lion in the fable, had made promises which were not carried out).

"Good counsel has ceased in Israel."

Rabbi Joshua was much praised after his death by his successors, and it was even said: "Since Rabbi Joshua died, good counsel has ceased in Israel." Other men have lived since his time who have given us "good counsel," but we can at all events remember the wit and practical advice which will serve for all time as a memorial of Rabbi Joshua ben Chananya.

CHAPTER XXVII

53–135 C.E.

STORIES OF THE RABBIS

IV. Akiba. עֲקִיבָא

Rabbi Akiba ben Joseph was one of the pupils of Rabbi Joshua ben Chananya, and thus was the pupil of the pupil of Rabban Jochanan ben Zakkai. He was one of the greatest of all the Rabbis who lived about the time when Jerusalem was destroyed, and when the land of Judea was for ever taken away from the people of Israel. His personal character was noble, but he was clever as well. He was the chief of those who finally settled of what books the Bible should consist, and we owe to him a good deal of the system of laws and regulations which were built up on the "Law of Moses" and form the Mishna. Akiba was called "the second Ezra," and it was said of him that the Law of Moses was weak until he explained it. He certainly did much to put the Jewish Law into proper order. Another great man, Rabbi Judah the Prince, afterwards called Akiba "a sealed treasure," and compared him to a workman who goes into the street with his basket, and puts into it whatever he chances to find, but arranges everything in order when he returns home. Just as rings are attached to vessels in order that they may be easily handled, so, said Rabbi Judah, Rabbi Akiba had made rules for the Torah by which it might be easily understood.

The "second Ezra."

Rabbi Akiba was so famous a man that all kinds of stories and legends have been associated with his life and teachings. In his boyhood days (he was born in the year 53) he was a shepherd, and whilst he was tending his master's flocks he had plenty of time to dream—and also

Akiba's marriage.

to fall in love. For he became engaged (so the story runs) to a very rich merchant's daughter, whose name was Rachel. The father, however, refused to consent to the marriage, and threatened Rachel that she would have none of his fortune if she persisted. But this did not prevent Akiba and his sweetheart from carrying out their wishes, and they became husband and wife. Akiba was probably glad that his wife had been disinherited, for he might have thought it dishonourable to marry a rich man's daughter against the father's will. But now, poor and friendless as they both were, he gladly took her, and she as gladly came.

He becomes a student.

Akiba's wife realised that they could not live on love alone, and so she made one condition to their marriage, and that was that Akiba should leave their home and study in the schools. He was thus, she said, to profit by God's good gifts, for young Akiba was a clever man. "Become a scholar," she said, "and then come back to me—you study and I will wait for your return." He is said to have been strengthened in his determination to try what he could do to adopt his wife's suggestion by one day accidentally noticing a stone, which, by the constant dropping of water, had been hollowed. "If," said Akiba, "this hard stone could thus be affected by the drops of water, why should not my heart be impressed, by constant study, by the influence of the Word of God?"

Rachel sells her hair.

They must have been very poor, for we are told that Rachel had to sell her hair in order to enable her husband to pursue his studies. But they were happy in spite of their poverty. Akiba comforted his wife on one occasion with the promise that when he became rich, as he hoped to be one day, he would buy for her what he called "a golden Jerusalem" (a diadem shaped like the "Holy City"). And poor as they were, they were not so poor that they forgot to be kind. Once, when a bundle of straw was the only bed they possessed, a poor man came to beg for some straw for a bed for his sick wife. Akiba at once divided with him his scanty possession, remarking to his wife: "Thou seest, my child, there are those poorer than we." Some of his neighbours objected to the smoke coming from the rushes which he burnt and used as a lamp, and told him that he ought to sell them and buy instead some oil

with which to study. He did not, however, agree with them, and said: "The straw serves three purposes for me—I study by it, I keep myself warm with it, and I sleep on it."

At the college.

At the college (for Akiba agreed to his wife's condition) the future great Rabbi soon made rapid progress in his studies, and later on was made Head of his college. We are told that soon after he began his studies he surprised his teachers by suggesting to them new points in the portions of the Law which he was learning. He was very persevering, and his teacher once illustrated this quality with the following parable: "A stone-cutter who was doing his work in the mountains was once seen standing upon a rocky height, knocking off small pieces of it. 'What art thou doing?' people asked him. His answer was: 'I am trying to uproot this mountain and throw it into the Jordan.' They laughed at him, but he continued his work; he knocked off piece after piece, and, when he had reduced the mountain to a big rock, he planted himself against it and pushed it, until he was able to throw it into the river Jordan." "In the same way," said his teachers, "has Akiba persevered, until he has even compelled us to improve our methods." We are not surprised, therefore, to find one of his colleagues saying to him: "To thee, Akiba, applies the following passage: 'He bindeth the floods from overflowing; and the thing that is hid bringeth he forth to light,' for things which were hidden from mankind thou hast brought to light." In later times he used to say, as he taught his disciples and was reminded of the way he spent his younger days: "I thank Thee, O Lord, my God, that Thou hast placed me among the studious, and not among the idlers in the markets."

Akiba's return to his wife.

After twelve years Akiba returned to his native village, and, entering the house where his wife lived, overheard an answer given by his wife to a neighbour, who was blaming him for his long absence. "If I had my wish," he heard Rachel say, "he should stay another twelve years at the academy." Taking Rachel at her word, and without crossing the threshold, Akiba turned back, and only returned after twelve years' study, during which he increased his reputation. This time the famous scholar came back escorted (so the story runs) by twenty-four thousand

disciples, who respectfully followed their beloved master. The visit of a great Rabbi to the little country place was looked upon as quite an event, and many hundreds of people came to welcome him. Among the crowd who came to meet the now distinguished Rabbi there was one shabby woman with her loveliness dimmed, but a world of longing in her sad eyes. When she, too, pressed forward, and even sought to embrace the great man, some of his pupils pushed her back, not being willing that such a poor woman should come near their master. But the years and the grief and the change had not dulled Akiba's sight, or lessened his love, though her beauty had waned and her poverty showed itself in her dress, all threadbare and worn. The husband knew his wife, and she knew him. Their affection for each other was above and beyond all accidents of time or station. Akiba caught Rachel in his arms and held her fast, never in this life to lose her again. And then, holding her to him, he turned to the astonished crowd and said: "My knowledge and your knowledge is all due to her. Let her alone. For what I am, and what we are, to this noble woman the thanks are due. For her love, and through her love, I have, by God's blessing, become what you see." And the crowd, touched and humbled, left them together.

He meets his father-in-law.

Soon after Akiba's arrival, Rachel's father went to him (not knowing that he was his son-in-law). He was beginning to repent of his treatment of his daughter. "Master," said he, "may I break a vow? Long ago my only daughter married a stupid beggar, and I vowed never to forgive her, and never to look upon her face again. But I wish to be reconciled to her. Can it be?" Akiba smiled. "Was it," he said, "because the husband was stupid, or because he was a beggar that you made this vow? Would you have been as unforgiving to a distinguished scholar?" "Of course not," said the rich man, looking rather puzzled. "I would have welcomed such a man with open arms. I would even have been satisfied if he had been the least of your disciples." "Well then," said the tall, grave, imposing-looking Rabbi (tasting then, perhaps, the sweetest of all revenge—returning good for evil), "I know not if I be the distinguished scholar that men call me, but I certainly am the Akiba who married your daughter."

How Akiba became a rich man.

And so the two became friends, and Akiba, by inheriting his father-in-law's wealth, became a very rich man. He was now able to fulfil his promise to his wife, and he presented her with a magnificent robe, on which was embroidered in gold a picture of Jerusalem. When he was reproached for being so extravagant, he replied that his wife deserved whatever he did for her. His experience of the blessings of a good wife made him afterwards say: "He is rich who has a wife comely in all her ways." But other circumstances, besides his father-in-law's money, made the former shepherd lad a wealthy man. Akiba had been authorised by certain Rabbis to borrow a large sum of money from a prominent heathen woman. As bondsmen for the loan Akiba named God and the sea, on the shore of which the woman's house stood. The Rabbi fell ill, and could not return the money at the appointed time. But his bondsmen did not forsake him. A chest containing much valuable treasure was cast upon the shore, close to the house of Akiba's creditor, so that, when the woman went to the shore to demand of the sea the amount she had lent to Akiba, the ebbing tide left boundless riches at her feet. Later, when Akiba arrived to pay the debt, the woman not only refused to accept the money, but insisted upon his receiving a large share of what the sea had brought to her.

chest from sea

Akiba and his lamp, cock, and ass.

This was not the only occasion on which Akiba was made to feel the truth of his favourite maxim: "Whatever God doeth, He doeth for the best." He was once compelled, by the persecution of the Romans, to leave his native land. Akiba wandered over barren wastes and dreary deserts. His whole belongings consisted of a lamp, which he used to light at night in order that he might study the Law; a cock, which served him instead of a watch to announce the coming of the dawn; and an ass on which he rode. The sun was gradually sinking beneath the horizon, night was fast approaching, and the poor, tired wanderer knew not where to shelter and rest his weary limbs. Almost exhausted with fatigue and hunger, he came at last to a village. He was glad to find it inhabited; for he thought that where human beings dwell, there dwell also humanity and kindness. But he was mistaken. He asked for a night's lodging. It was, however, refused. Not one of the inhospitable inhabitants would give him shelter.

Akiba was, therefore, obliged to seek rest in a neighbouring wood.

"God doeth for the best."

"It is hard, very hard," he said, "not to find a hospitable roof to protect me from the rough weather. But God is just. All that God doeth, He doeth for the best." The trustful Rabbi thereupon seated himself beneath a tree, lit his lamp, and began to read the Law. He had scarcely read a chapter, when a violent storm arose, and extinguished the light. "What!" he exclaimed, "must I not be permitted to pursue my study? But God is just. Whatever He doeth, He doeth for the best." Akiba then stretched himself on the bare earth, desiring, if possible, to have a few hours' rest. He had, however, scarcely closed his eyes, when a wild animal came and killed the cock. "What new misfortune is this?" said the astonished Rabbi. "My vigilant companion is gone. Who then will now awaken me to the study of the Law? But God is just. Whatever He doeth, He doeth for the best." The words had not been uttered a minute, when a lion came and carried off the ass. "What is to be done now?" exclaimed the lonely wanderer. "My poor ass, too, is gone—all is gone. But praised be the Lord! Whatever He doeth, He doeth for the best."

How Akiba's life was saved.

Akiba passed a sleepless night, and early the next morning he went to the village, to see whether he could procure another beast of burden to enable him to pursue his journey. His surprise was great when he found not a single individual alive. He learned that a band of robbers had entered the village during the night, and had killed the inhabitants and plundered their houses. As soon as Rabbi Akiba had sufficiently recovered from the amazement into which this wonderful occurrence had thrown him, he exclaimed: "Thou great God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob! Now I know by experience that poor mortal men are shortsighted and blind, often considering as evils what is intended for their good. But Thou alone art just and kind and merciful. Had not the hard-hearted people driven me, by their lack of hospitality, from the village, I should assuredly have shared their fate. If my ass had brayed, if my cock had crowed, or if the robbers had seen the light of my lamp, I should surely have met my death." And so the faithful Rabbi said once more: "God is just; all that God doeth, He doeth for the best."

A gardener's objection.

Faith, said the Rabbis of old, is a very good thing, but no man has a right to neglect his duty, and cast himself on God, saying that he has trust in Him to do what he himself ought to do. People like Rabbi Akiba taught this practical lesson by their lives. One day the Rabbi was walking through the streets of Jerusalem with another wise man, when a sick man came up to them, complaining about his ailment, and asking their advice. When they told him of a remedy, another man came up to them and reproached them with not being religious. "If," argued the latter, "it is God's will that this sick man should have a certain disease, are you going to act against God's decision by removing the disease which has been decreed for him?" "What is your occupation?" demanded the Rabbis in reply. "I am a gardener, as you may see by the tools which I carry in my hands," answered the man. "But why do you interefere with the earth which God has created?" asked Rabbi Akiba. "If I were not to manure, prune, and water the trees," retorted the gardener, "how could I expect them to produce their fruits?" "Man is even like the tree of the field," returned the Rabbis. "He requires tender treatment and attention to his body to make it flourish and keep in good condition."

CHAPTER XXVIII

STORIES OF THE RABBIS

Akiba (*continued*).

On loan.

Akiba's imagination often led him to explain things in such beautiful language that his sayings may sometimes be called "pictures in words." He once wished to tell his pupils how short life really is, and that it is only given to us "on loan" to use to the best possible advantage. Thus he said: "Everything is given to man on pledge, and the net (of death) is cast over the living. The shop is opened. The dealer (the Lord of all the world) gives credit (for reward and punishment do not immediately follow our actions). Then the ledger is opened; the hand writes; and whosoever wishes to borrow comes and borrows. The bailiffs (the angels who allot reward and punishment—happiness and suffering) go round continually every day, and demand payment from every man, whether he be content or not. The judgment is a just judgment, and everything is prepared for the 'banquet' of Heaven" (for even the wicked have a share in the world to come).

Advice to his son.

Akiba gave the following advice to his son on one occasion: "Do not dwell in the high parts of the city, so that passers-by shall not disturb thee in thy studies. Do not dwell in a city whose leaders are scholars, because, not being practical men, they do not know how to look after its interests. Do not walk barefooted. Rise up early, and have an early breakfast in the summer on account of the heat, in the winter because of the cold. Turn thy Sabbath into a week-day rather than be dependent on thy neighbours. Do not enter thy own house suddenly unannounced; how much more so thy friend's house (in case thou shouldst see something of which they might be ashamed in thy presence—and why shouldst thou put them

to shame?). Do not associate thyself with wicked people, lest thou do evil like them, for often one bad apple in a basket will spoil the rest. Associate with good people, in order that thou mayest copy their actions, and then thou wilt receive rewards like them."

"New life."

As an instance of Akiba's kindness and thought for other people, the following incident is told. One of his pupils became ill. Rabbi Akiba visited him. Not finding any attendant, he remained with the pupil, scrubbed the floor, and, in fact, did everything to make the sick man comfortable until he was better. The invalid said to his master: "Rabbi, you have given me new life!" Akiba afterwards publicly preached that "he who does not visit a sick person is as if he shortens his life."

A good investment.

In addition to trying to do good with the money that he possessed, Rabbi Akiba endeavoured to induce others to make good use of their belongings. His heart was, indeed, so full of kindness that it was compared to the door of a spacious palace—it was so wide and open. On one occasion Akiba said to Rabbi Tarphon, who was a very wealthy man, but was not charitable according to his means: "Shall I invest some money for thee in an estate in a manner which will be very profitable?" Rabbi Tarphon consented, and brought Akiba 4000 denars in gold. Akiba merely distributed the money among the poor. Some time afterwards, Tarphon met Akiba, and asked him where the estate was. Akiba led his friend to the college, and showed him a little boy, who recited the words of the Psalmist: "He hath dispersed, he hath given to the needy; his righteousness endureth for ever" (Psalm cxii. 9). "Listen!" said Akiba, "thy property is with David, the King of Israel, who said: 'He hath given to the needy.'" "And wherefore hast thou done this?" said Tarphon. "Could I not have distributed the money myself to the poor, without thy assistance?" "Nay," replied Akiba, "it is a greater virtue to cause another to give than to give thyself."

A clever explanation.

A man once said to Akiba: "I know, as well as thou knowest, that there is nothing real in an idol. But how is it that a cripple with broken limbs, whom I saw enter a heathen temple, came away healed and sound?" "I will explain this to thee by a parable," replied Rabbi Akiba.

"It is like a certain man, who was considered so trustworthy that his fellow-townsmen used to deposit their money with him without witnesses. One man, however, when he made a deposit, had witnesses present. Once he forgot himself and deposited his money without witnesses. The wife said to her husband: 'Come! Let us deny this deposit, and keep it for ourselves.' 'What!' said he, 'because this fool has acted imprudently, shall we forfeit our good name for honesty? No! this shall never be.' So," continued Rabbi Akiba, "it is with diseases. They leave people at certain times, and it may happen occasionally that this occurs when people visit a heathen temple. Should their cure be delayed, merely because certain fools have acted improperly by praying before images of wood and stone?"

Good rules.

In order to preserve health and to avoid catching disease, Akiba advised people to copy the rules of the Medes—to carve meat only upon a table, to kiss only on the hands, and, when they had secrets to communicate, to do so in the open field; for "walls have ears."

Study.

Like so many of the other Rabbis, Akiba laid great stress on study. Thus he said: "Study the Law in thy old age, even if thou hast studied it in thy youth. Do not say: 'I do not need to study when I am old;' but study it always, because thou knowest not which will succeed. If thou hast studied the Law in years of plenty, do not rely on that for the years of famine; as it is written: 'In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not which shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good' (Eccles. xi. 6)." "In the world to come," said the Rabbis in later years, "Rabbi Akiba will be a warning to the poor who have neglected study. When they are questioned why they have not studied the Law, and they answer because they were poor and had to work for a livelihood, then Rabbi Akiba will be held up to them as one who was also poor and wearied, and yet did study; and if they should say because of their little children, again Rabbi Akiba will be pointed to as a man who had many sons and daughters, and yet supported them and his wife Rachel."

CHAPTER XXIX

STORIES OF THE RABBIS

Akiba (*continued*)

Akiba was fond of meeting people who did not quite agree with his views, and answering any questions, however difficult, they might put to him. One day the Roman General, Turnus Rufus, inquired of Akiba: "If your God loves the poor, why does He not support them?" "God allows the poor to be with us for ever," replied the Rabbi, "in order that the opportunities for doing good may never fail." "But," said the General again, "how do you know that God approves of giving charity? If a master were to punish some of his slaves, keeping them without food, or drink, or clothes, would he be pleased if men were to come and feed and clothe them?" "Granted," answered the Rabbi; "but would a tender father, whose children had fallen into poverty and distress through their neglect, and who could no longer justly assist them—would he be displeased, do you think, if some kind person pitied and helped them? We are not slaves to a harsh master. God calls us His 'children,' and Himself our 'Father.'" *Answering awkward questions.*

On another occasion Turnus Rufus asked: "Which is more beautiful, God's work or man's?" "Undoubtedly, man's work is the better," was Akiba's reply; "for whilst nature, at God's command, supplies us only with the raw material, human skill enables us to elaborate the same according to the requirements of art and good taste." Rufus had expected a different answer, and he tried to drive Akiba into a corner by another question: "Why has God not made man just as He wanted him to be? Why has He commanded you to go through the operation of circumcision, for instance?" "For the very *Which is more beautiful?*

reason," was the reply, "that the duty of man is to perfect himself."

Answered in his own coin.

Rufus also asked Akiba why one day (the Sabbath) was different from other days. Akiba replied by asking another question. "Why is one man," he said, "(that is to say, yourself, the governor) different from other men?" "Because of the will of my master, the Emperor," replied Rufus. Then Akiba said: "In the same way the Sabbath is different from other days on account of the will of its Master—God." "But why," continued Rufus, "does not God Himself rest, since He commands others to do so?" "A man may 'carry burdens,'" replied Akiba, "within the bounds of his house on the Sabbath. The whole world is God's house, and He can take things from one part of His house to another without labour."

Akiba's distinguished dogs.

"Why," asked Turnus Rufus of Rabbi Akiba on a subsequent occasion, "have we incurred the hatred of your God so that He says: 'I hate Esau'?" (the Romans were said to be the descendants of Esau). Akiba said he would reply to the question on the following day. On his making his appearance next morning, Rufus, thinking that Rabbi Akiba had postponed the answer the day before in order meanwhile to invent some lame explanation, said to him: "Well, Akiba, what have you dreamt during the night?" Rabbi Akiba, taking the very question as the text for his reply, said: "I dreamt I possessed two dogs which I named Rufus and Rufina" (the General and his wife). Rufus, in a great fury, asked Rabbi Akiba how he dared offer him and his wife so great an insult as to call his dogs by their names. "Don't be so angry," returned Akiba calmly. "You and yours are God's creatures. So are dogs God's creatures. You eat and drink, have children, live, decay, and die. All this is also the case with dogs. Yet how angry you get because they bear the same name as you! Consider, then, that God stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth. He is the Creator, Ruler of all things, whether they be living, or without life. Yet you make an idol of wood and stone, worship it, and call it by the name of 'God.' Should you not then incur His hatred?"

Akiba's daughter.

Rabbi Akiba had a daughter, and the astrologers told him that, on her wedding-day, she would be bitten by

a serpent, and would die. The Rabbi was naturally very distressed about this prophecy, but neither he nor his daughter thought any more about the matter after a little time. On her wedding-day a poor man came to the door, begging for a morsel of bread. As every one in the house seemed to be too much engaged in preparations for the wedding to pay any attention to the poor man, the bride took part of her own meal, and gave it to the beggar. In the evening, before she went to bed, she took a wreath from her head, and fastened it with a nail on a wall in the pavilion erected for the bridal couple. The nail entered the eye of a serpent which was concealed there, and killed it. On the following morning, when she took down the wreath, the serpent fell to the floor. She told her father of the incident, who at once asked her what good act she had performed. When she told him that she had given some of her own food to a beggar on the previous day, he remarked that the good deed she had done had delivered her from death, and he quoted the saying: "But charity delivereth from death" (Prov. x. 2); and the verse: "Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days" (Eccles. xi. 1).

Proof positive.

A man once asked Rabbi Akiba: "Who created this world?" "The Holy One; blessed be He," was the reply. "Give me positive proof of this," demanded the Rabbi's questioner. "What are you dressed in?" asked Akiba. "In a garment, of course," was the reply. "Who made it?" then asked the Rabbi. "A weaver," said the man. "I do not believe you," said Akiba; "give me positive proof of this." "I do not need to prove this," answered the man; "it stands to reason that a weaver made it." "Even so," replied Rabbi Akiba, "you must know that God created the world." When the man had departed, Akiba's pupils asked him what "proof positive" meant. He replied: "My children, in the same way as a house implies a builder, and a garment a weaver, and a door a carpenter, so likewise the existence of the world implies that it came into being by the hand of God."

The meaning of a smile.

On one occasion, when Rabbi Akiba and three other Rabbis were in Rome, they heard the hum of the great city, showing its prosperity. Akiba smiled, and the others wept. His companions said to Akiba: "Why do you

smile?" He asked them in turn why they cried. They replied: "When we see these idolaters sitting at rest in peace in their houses, whilst our Sanctuary is burned down, shall we not weep?" Akiba said to them, however: "That is just why I am smiling. If this is the reward of those who are wicked for any little good they may do, how much more reward shall those who worship God obtain?"

The fox in the ruins.

Another similar incident occurred when Akiba was walking with some companions near the site of the burnt Temple. They saw a fox stealing out of the ruins. Rabbi Akiba laughed. "Why do you laugh?" they asked. "And why do you lament?" he asked them in reply, for they had burst into tears. "How can we do anything but be sad," they cried, "when we see the Temple destroyed, and its ruins become dens of wild beasts?" "It is just on that account that I rejoice," said the hopeful Rabbi. "If the disasters threatened by the prophets have come upon us ('For this our heart is faint; for these things our eyes are dim. Because of the mountain of Zion, which is desolate, foxes roam about'—Lam. v. 17–18), surely the salvation promised us by them will also be given to us in God's good time. For hath not the prophet said (Jer. xxx. 18–19): 'Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwelling-places; and the city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof. And out of them shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice of them that make merry: and I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small'?" Then his colleagues said: "Thou hast comforted us, O Akiba, thou hast comforted us."

Akiba's modesty.

With all his scholarship and knowledge, Akiba practised and preached modesty. "He who esteems himself highly on account of his knowledge," he would say, "is like a carcass lying on the wayside; the traveller turns his head away in disgust, and walks quickly by." To his pupils he said: "Take thy place a few seats below thy rank, until thou art bidden to take a higher place. For it is better that they should say to thee, 'Come up higher,' than they should bid thee 'go down lower'" (Prov. xxv. 7). "If thou hast acquired knowledge," he said, "do not at the

same time acquire a haughty spirit on account of thy knowledge; and if thou intendest to expound God's word, recite to thyself twice or thrice what thou intendest saying." On one occasion, acting on this maxim, Rabbi Akiba declined to read the Law, when he was called upon to do so, on the ground that he never did so unless he had rehearsed the portion twice or thrice to himself previously.

His son's funeral.

Akiba's modesty is also shown by his address on the occasion of the funeral of his son Simon, which took place in a city in the province of Galilee, in the north of Palestine. To the large assembly of men, women, and children gathered on the occasion from every quarter he said: "Brethren of the house of Israel, listen to me. Not because I am a scholar have ye appeared here so numerously; for there are those more learned than I. Nor because I am a wealthy man have ye come; for there are many more wealthy than I. The people of the south know Akiba; but whence should the people of Galilee know him? The men are acquainted with him; but how shall the women and children I see here be said to be acquainted with him? Still I know that your reward shall be great, for ye have given yourselves the trouble of coming simply in order to do honour to the Torah and to fulfil a religious duty."

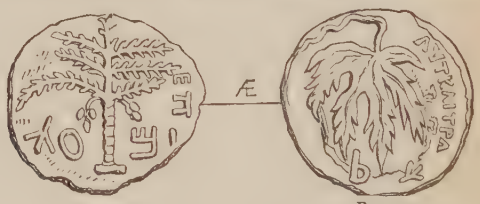
Akiba and Bar Cochba.

The part that Akiba played in the rebellion against the Romans which was led by Bar Cochba ("the son of a star") illustrates his love for his country. The times were very troublous indeed. The tyrannous yoke of Rome lay so heavily upon Israel that Akiba believed that things could not be worse; he thought, therefore, that a crisis was at hand, and that a Messiah would come and deliver the people from oppression and tyranny. When Bar Cochba came forward, he looked upon him as the promised Messiah, quoting the Bible verse: "There shall come a star out of Jacob" (Num. xxiv. 17). His efforts were, however, all in vain. Over half a million Jews were put to death by the Romans. Many were taken captive to Rome, and the most learned and pious men of the country suffered the death of martyrs. Among those who were arrested was Akiba himself. Akiba believed very much in Bar Cochba, and became his most strenuous supporter in spite of the warning of his colleague, Rabban Gamliel: "Grass will grow from thy jaws ere the Messiah arrives." He had

an intense and even narrow patriotism. For him God was the "God of Israel," who would free His people from Roman oppression. Any one who would assist in bringing this about was to him some one sent by God. This explains his keenness in supporting Bar Cochba's claim to be the Messiah. The revolt failed; but, till it was crushed, Akiba believed in its leader, and went about the country encouraging people to rally to Bar Cochba's standard.

The fox and the fishes.

Rabbi Akiba's death was as eloquent as his life. The Romans had made a decree that any one who taught the Jewish Law should be put to death. Akiba had disregarded this decree, and this, added to his share in Bar Cochba's revolt, no doubt made the Romans eager to



Obverse *Reverse*

COIN ISSUED DURING BAR COCHBA'S REVOLT

Obverse:—Hebrew word "Simon" (Bar Cochba's name) and a palm-tree. *Reverse*:—Hebrew words "The deliverance of Jerusalem," and a vine leaf.

kill him. One day a man named Pappus ben Judah (who advised the Jews to submit to the Romans at all costs) said to Akiba: "Dost thou not fear the fate which is before thee? Would it not be better to give up teaching the Law and thus save thy life?" "I will tell thee a fable," replied the Rabbi. "A fox was once walking on the banks of a stream, and saw a number of fishes gathered together in great fear at the bottom of the water. 'Why are you so frightened?' said the fox. 'Men,' replied the fishes, 'are spreading their nets in the stream to catch us, and we are trying to escape.' 'I'll tell you what to do,' observed Reynard. 'Go yonder upon the rocks, where the men cannot catch you, and let us all dwell together as one people, as my father dwelt with your fathers.' 'Are you indeed the fox,' exclaimed the fishes, 'who is esteemed the most clever of all animals? You must certainly be

the most stupid, if you give us such advice. The water is our native element, and, if we are in danger here, how much greater will be our risk if we leave it?'"

"Pappus," said Rabbi Akiba, "the moral of the fable is simple. Religion is the source of all good. For that alone we exist. If men pursue us, we should not basely flee from danger by taking refuge in death. We are told of the Lord that 'He is thy life, and the length of thy days' (Deut. xxx. 20). That is when things are peaceful with us. How much greater is our need of Him, then, in times like these?" Soon after, when Bar Cochba's revolt had failed, Akiba was arrested, and so also was Pappus. They met in prison, and Pappus said to the Rabbi: "Happy is Akiba, who hath been imprisoned on account of his devotion to the Law. Woe is Pappus, who hath been imprisoned for trivial matters." *The moral.*

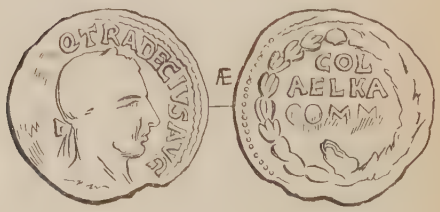
Akiba, like all the Rabbis, followed Jewish custom in attaching great importance to the religious duty of washing the hands before meals. One day, during his imprisonment, the gaoler said to Akiba's servant, as he was about to enter his cell: "What a lot of water thou hast brought to-day. Dost thou need it to sap the walls of the prison?" So saying, he seized the vessel, and poured out half of the water. When the servant brought in to Akiba what was left of the water, the Rabbi, who was weary of waiting (for he was faint and thirsty), reproachfully said to him: "Dost thou forget that I am old, and my very life depends upon thee?" The servant told Akiba what had happened, and the Rabbi asked for the water to wash his hands. "Why! master," said the servant, "there is not enough for thee to drink, much less to cleanse thy hands." Akiba replied: "They who neglect to wash their hands are judged worthy of death. It is better that I should die by my own act from thirst than act against the Law." *Cleanliness in prison.*

Akiba was condemned to death by the Romans. When the Rabbi was led forth to the place of execution, it was just the time for the morning service. He therefore recited the *Shema*. "Hear, O Israel! the Lord is our God, the Lord is One," he exclaimed calmly, and in a loud, firm voice, although he was suffering agonies from the torture, for his skin had been torn off with irons. When the Roman Governor, Turnus Rufus, asked him whether *Rabbi Akiba's heroic death.*

he was a sorcerer, since apparently he felt no pain, Akiba replied: "I am no sorcerer; but I rejoice at the opportunity now given me to love my God with all my soul, seeing that hitherto I have been able to love Him only with all my heart and with all my might. I know now what it is to 'love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.'" And, so saying, he died.

Practising as well as preaching.

Akiba was one of the greatest of the Jewish Rabbis. He indeed practised what he preached. The one thing was for him bound up in the other. Thus, some of the Rabbis were once discussing which was greater, the study of the Law, or the practice of it. One said: "Practice is the greater." "No," said Rabbi Akiba, "study is the greater, because study brings about practice." His teachings and his life will, indeed, serve for all time as patterns for those who follow him. The pretty love story of the days of his youth, and the brave conduct which accompanied his heroic death, are incidents which should live in the memories and the hearts of all those, whether they be young or old, who admire the brave and the gentle, the good and the true.



CHAPTER XXX

90–160 C.E.

STORIES OF THE RABBIS

V. MEIR. מֵאִיר

His early days.

RABBI MEIR lived in the second century, being the pupil of Rabbi Akiba. He was born in Asia Minor, and earned his living by copying scrolls of the Law. Except that when quite young Rabbi Meir entered the school of Rabbi Akiba, little is known of his early days. Finding the teaching given in Akiba's school too difficult for him, he went to another House of Learning, returning to Akiba when he had made sufficient progress in his studies. Rabbi Akiba soon found how clever his pupil was, and made him Rabbi over the heads of his other pupils.

A legend of Nero.

A legend says that Rabbi Meir was descended from the Roman Emperor, Nero, who escaped when he was removed from his position as Emperor, and subsequently became converted to Judaism. The legend narrates that a rumour reached Rome in the time of the Emperor Nero that the Israelites proposed to rebel. A large army was collected to suppress the revolt. The Emperor, desiring to have a good omen for the expedition, shot an arrow into the air, and carefully watched the direction in which it descended. The arrow fell in the direction of Jerusalem. Nero then went to the opposite side of the path, and, shooting another arrow into the air, observed that this, too, came down pointing towards the Holy City. He did the same from many other positions: every time the arrow fell in the same way. The Emperor thereupon took this as an omen supporting the venture.

The instrument of God's anger.

One day, on the way to Jerusalem, he met a Jewish boy, and said to him: "Recite to me the first passage of your Law which you learnt to-day." The boy quoted the

passage from the prophet Ezekiel, which foretells that God would destroy Jerusalem and raze the Temple to the ground, but would also cause to perish the nations that rose up against the Jews. The Emperor was surprised at this, and thought to himself: "Apparently I am to be the instrument of God's anger, and then the turn of the instrument (myself) will come." He took this very much to heart, immediately gave up the siege, disappeared from public life, and became a Jew.

In the mountains.

Rabbi Meir received a notable example of courage and strength of character from one of his old teachers, Rabbi Judah ben Baba. During the troublous times in Jerusalem the old man fled to the mountains, and there gathered round him a band of disciples for the purpose of ordination as Rabbis, which had been made a capital offence by the Romans. One of these was Rabbi Meir. Their presence in the hills became known to the Roman spies, who came to their hiding-place. As soon as Rabbi Judah saw that they had been discovered, he said to his pupils: "Run away, my children." "And what will become of you?" they answered. "I shall throw myself before my enemies," said the old man, "like a stone that nobody looks at or takes care of." Then the Roman troops came upon them. They killed the brave old man, throwing three hundred iron spears at him. Rabbi Meir and his fellow-students were, however, able to escape, and fled in various directions.

Obverse *Reverse*

A JEWISH COIN OF THE TIME OF NERO

Obverse:—Greek words meaning "Nero Emperor," with the head of Nero laureated. *Reverse*:—Abbreviated Greek words meaning King Agrippa at the time of Nero.

Shedding light.

When the Emperor Hadrian was dead, and Antoninus Pius succeeded to the Roman throne, things took a turn for the better. The Emperor permitted the Rabbis (amongst whom was Rabbi Meir) to found a school in the city of Usha. Meir must have been very active in this academy, for it was here that he was given his name "Meir" (which means "One who sheds light"), his real name having been Mayasha. In later years Meir was a colleague on the Beth Din of Rabbi Simon ben Gamliel,

the father of Rabbi Judah the Prince. Rabbi Simon was Head of the Court, and had very great regard for the dignity of his position. He passed a rule that when Rabbi Meir entered the Court only one row of those present need rise, whereas when he himself entered everybody had to stand up. Meir did not like this rule, and he made up his mind to retaliate on Rabbi Simon by asking him a question which he would not be able to answer. Simon, however, learned what was proposed, and was able to prepare himself. On other days Meir, however, contented himself by asking Simon other very difficult questions of which he had not had warning. Simon was naturally annoyed, and forbade Meir to sit on the Beth Din. Meir, though he was a young man, did not approve of following the teachings of even the most distinguished men without individual study. He retorted, therefore, to Simon, who had not paid him the respect which was due to his learning: "Look not to the vessel, but to its contents. Many a new vessel contains old wine, and there are old vessels which do not contain even new wine." With this final thrust at his enemy, Rabbi Meir left Usha and settled in Asia Minor.

An embassy to Rome.

One day a message came from the Roman Emperor to the wise men of Palestine: "Send us one of your great lamps." At first the Rabbis did not understand the message. But at length they realised that the Romans wanted them to send one of their greatest scholars to the Senate to discuss certain questions affecting the Jews and their religion. They sent Rabbi Meir, because he was the man who shed light on the Torah, and therefore was a "great lamp." They were not disappointed in their hopes, because Rabbi Meir answered all the questions put to him in a satisfactory manner, his knowledge of the Greek language assisting him in this.

Rabbi Meir's powers of argument.

Rabbi Meir put new life into the development of the *Halacha*, or practical side of the *Law* (as opposed to the Agada, containing theoretical discussions, moral lessons, and stories), and continued the labours of Rabbi Akiba in putting this rich material into proper order. His powers of argument and discussion were so great that his hearers followed him with much difficulty. It was said that he was able to give one hundred reasons to prove that an article

of food was *kosher* (*i.e.* permitted to be eaten by Law), and an equal number of reasons to prove that it was *trifa* (not allowed to be eaten). The arguments on either side were so nearly equal that it was sometimes difficult to find out the Rabbi's real opinion, and many of his decisions were not, therefore, respected as much as if he had given more decided answers.

A feat of memory.

Rabbi Meir must have had a wonderful memory, as the following incident proves. On one of his travels, during the feast of Purim, he found himself in a small village where no copy of the Book of Esther could be found. His work as a copyist had enabled him to learn many of the sacred books by heart. He was able, therefore, to write out the whole book from memory without a single mistake! In the same place Rabbi Meir found a family nearly all of whose members had died at an early age in life. The survivors asked him to pray for them; but he advised them instead to be of a charitable disposition, for they would by that means prolong life.

Rabbi Meir and his wife.

The Rabbi was much attached to his family, and his wife Beruriah was as good and pious as her husband. There dwelt in the neighbourhood of Rabbi Meir's house some Jews who were followers of Greek customs. This annoyed the Rabbi very much. In his vexation he would have prayed to God asking that they should be destroyed. But his wife said: "Be mindful of the teachings of thy faith. Pray not that sinners may perish, but that the *sins* may disappear, and no opportunity for their practice remain, not as the Psalmist says: 'Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more' (Psalm civ. 35)."

Death of his two sons.

The confidence in God cherished by Rabbi Meir and his wife was beautifully shown in the sad death of their two sons. This occurred suddenly, one Sabbath, whilst the Rabbi was away from home at his school. His tender-hearted wife did not at first tell him what had happened, in order that he might not be grieved by the sad tidings on the sacred day. When the Sabbath was over, however, she said to him: "My husband, some time ago two precious jewels were placed with me for safe keeping. He who left them with me called for them to-day, and I delivered them into his hands." "That

is right," said the Rabbi approvingly; "we must always return cheerfully and faithfully all that is placed in our care."

The return of the jewels.

Shortly afterwards the Rabbi asked for his two sons, and the mother, taking him by the hand, led him gently into the chamber of death. The Rabbi, realising the truth, wept bitterly. But his wife consoled him with what he had just said to her. "Weep not, beloved husband," said the Rabbi's noble wife; "didst thou not say to me that we must return cheerfully, when called for, all that has been placed in our care? God gave us these 'jewels.' He left them with us for a time, and we gloried in their possession. But, now that He calls for His own, we should not be too much grieved, but even thankful that they have been preserved to us so long." "True!" replied Rabbi Meir; "'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord' (Job i. 21)." And, addressing his wife, he continued: "Blessed be His name for the gift of thee also. For a virtuous woman has greater treasure than costly pearls" (her sons). "'She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue'" (Prov. xxxi. 26).

As peace-maker.

Rabbi Meir was, like so many of the Rabbis, active in making peace between people who quarrelled. On one occasion he heard of two men who lived with each other but were seldom good friends. Throughout the week, whilst they were at work, and had their time occupied, they were at peace with each other. As soon, however, as the Sabbath arrived, they commenced to offend each other and quarrel. Meir secured an invitation to spend three weeks with them. By his pleasant, amiable words he calmed them, and taught them the value of peace. "These people," he said, "have lived for three weeks without quarrelling. They are now used to living peacefully together. They only quarrelled because they had nothing else to do, and from sheer habit." What Rabbi Meir did was to go to one of them and say: "Look here, my friend, just see what your companion is doing. He is sitting there very sad, saying, 'I am ashamed of myself—how can I look at my friend's face?'" Then he went to the other, and told him: "I have just come from your friend. He doesn't know what to do to appease you." When, therefore, they

met, they fell on each other's neck, and became friends again.

Rabbi Meir's fables.

It was, however, Rabbi Meir's stories, fables, and maxims that secured him the greatest popularity. He was well versed in Greek and Latin, and was thus able to draw upon the literatures of Greece and Rome for the stories with which he charmed his hearers. He is said to have composed no fewer than three hundred fables dealing with foxes. Of these the following is an example:—

The fox and the bear.

A fox said to a bear: "Come, let us go into this kitchen. They are making preparations for the Sabbath, and we shall be able to find food." The bear followed the fox. But, being a big animal, he was captured and punished (for his father had already been troublesome in the house). Angry at this, he wanted to tear the fox to pieces. "You knave," exclaimed the bear, "why did you deceive me?" "I am not at fault," replied the fox; "you have probably been punished on account of your father's sins."

A fine cheese.

"Nay," said the fox (continues the fable), "come with me, my good friend: let us not quarrel. I will lead you to another place, where we shall surely find food." The fox then led the bear to a well, where two buckets were fastened together by a rope, balanced like a pair of scales. It was night, and the fox pointed to the moon reflected in the water, saying: "Here is a fine cheese. Let us descend, and partake of it." The fox entered his pail first. But, being too light to balance the weight of the bear, he took a heavy stone with him. As soon, however, as the bear had got into the other pail, the fox threw the stone away. Consequently, he rose, whilst the bear descended to the bottom. "How shall I get out?" asked the bear. "It is written in Scripture," said the sly fox, "'The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead' (Prov. xi. 8)."

The moral of the fable.

From this part of the fable Rabbi Meir draws the moral that each man must suffer for his own sins. "He who follows the 'luminary of the night' (greediness)," he said, "must perish, whilst the righteous one, though carrying a stone (sin), will be delivered from death, if he throws it away in time."

The fox and the garden.

Another of Rabbi Meir's fables was as follows: A fox one day seeing some delicious fruit hanging from some

trees in a garden, had a strong desire to eat some of it. He ran round the garden wall, which was too high for him to climb over, in the hope of finding an open gate. But the only entrance was a narrow opening, and Reynard found that he was too fat to creep through. He therefore fasted three days, until he had become thin enough, and then crawled through into the garden. After having spent a long time among the fruit-trees, and eaten more than satisfied his appetite, the fox tried to get away. But he found that, as before, he was too fat. He therefore had to fast another three days. When he crawled through the entrance the second time, he was just as thin as before. "Garden! garden!" he exclaimed, when he was outside again, "thou art indeed charming and delightful. Thy fruits are delicious and exquisite. But of what benefit art thou to me? What have I now for all my labour and cunning? Am I not as lean as I was before?" "Even so," said the Rabbi, "is it with man. Naked he comes into the world's garden. Naked he must go out of it. And, of all his toils and labour and worldly goods, he can carry nothing with him."

CHAPTER XXXI

STORIES OF THE RABBIS

MEIR (*continued*)

Meir's companion.

MEIR'S wit often saved him from misfortune. Once he made a long journey, and put up for the night at an inn. The innkeeper was a dishonest man. He would arouse his guests during the night, and tell them that they must proceed on their journey. Then, offering his services, he would accompany the guests a short distance, and, when they reached the woods, his practice was to kill and rob them. Rabbi Meir became suspicious of the innkeeper before he had been long in the house. He was aroused at midnight in the usual way, but said to the innkeeper: "I have a companion in the city, and I cannot leave without him." Mine host rejoiced that he would have two victims instead of one, and asked Rabbi Meir what his companion's name was, and where he was stopping. "My companion's name is *Kitob*, and he is sleeping at the *Beth Hamedrash* (House of Learning)," replied Meir. The host hurried to the Beth Hamedrash, and called out in loud tones: "Kitob! Kitob! Your companion wants you. He cannot proceed on his journey without you." But there was no response. In the meantime day dawned, and Rabbi Meir prepared for his journey. As he was about to mount his ass, the innkeeper said to him: "Why did you deceive me? You have no companion." "I did not deceive you," replied Rabbi Meir. "Cannot you see my companion with your eyes? Is it not written in the Bible, 'And God saw the light, that it was good' (Gen. i. 4)? The two Hebrew words, כִּי טוֹב (*Kitob*), mean 'that it was good.' My companion is the daylight. If, therefore, you see the light, you see my companion!"

Rabbi Meir's Friday evening addresses.

"Show thyself humble to every man" was one of Rabbi Meir's favourite sayings, and he acted up to his motto in his own life. The Rabbi used to give addresses on Friday evenings after the Sabbath meal. They were very well attended, since they contained a word in season for all classes of the community. The rich were to be charitable and the poor hopeful; employers were told to be kind to their workpeople, and the latter were advised to be faithful to their masters. Parents carried away advice as to the training of children. Teachers were impressed with the necessity of patience, and pupils were told to be obedient and diligent. Wives—for whose benefit especially the addresses were given—were taught the duties which are necessary to make husbands and homes happy.

A jealous husband.

Among the women in the audience was one who had the misfortune to have a jealous husband. As soon as the sermon was over, she hastened home, only to find the house in darkness, and her husband very angry. "Where have you been?" he inquired. "As you are aware, my dear husband," the wife replied, "I, like others, appreciate so much the sermons and teaching of the good and wise Rabbi, that, when I am able to do so, I like to hear him, and always feel that I carry away some useful lesson." This little speech only made the foolish husband still more angry. "You shall not step over the threshold of my house," he cried, "without going to your beloved Rabbi, and spitting in his face." The poor woman at first looked upon this ridiculous order as a foolish whim, which would soon pass.

The Rabbi's sore eyes.

Unfortunately, the fool persisted in his folly. The affair became known in the town, and finally Rabbi Meir heard of it. The neighbours persuaded the woman to comply with her husband's wish. When, however, she appeared before the Rabbi, her courage failed her. The kind Rabbi, who was only anxious that peace should be restored between the woman and her husband, regardless of his own dignity, pretended to have sore eyes. He ordered her to spit into them seven times as a remedy. The woman stated that once would suffice. "Never mind," said the peace-loving Rabbi, "go home and tell your husband that you wished to spit only once in my eyes, but that you did so as many as seven times. This will please your husband." She did as Rabbi Meir told her, and peace

was thus made between the woman and her husband. To his pupils, to whom his conduct seemed strange, Rabbi Meir explained that the good end of making peace between man and wife had justified this harmless pretence, as otherwise there would have been no happiness for the poor woman. Incidents like this fully justify the description afterwards given of Meir that he was "a great man and a saint, and humble withal."

"Our children will be our sureties."

Rabbi Meir must have been very fond of addressing children. We can almost imagine him now, in one of the Synagogues or Houses of Study, with a group of boys and girls round him listening to one of his delightful fox stories. One day he wanted to explain to them that in their hands rested the future of the community, and that they must, therefore, prepare themselves for the great responsibility which would afterwards be theirs. He told them the legend that when the Law was about to be given on Mount Sinai, God said to the Israelites: "Bring me 'sureties' that you will keep the Law, and I will then give it to you." The children of Israel then said: "Our ancestors will be our sureties." But God replied: "I cannot accept them, for they have passed away. Bring me better ones." And then they said: "Our prophets will be our sureties." "They are not sufficient," was the reply, "for they, too, are no more." The Israelites then offered the sun and the moon and the hills. But these, too, were rejected, for they were not lasting. At last the Israelites said: "Our children will be our sureties." And God said: "These will I accept." Rabbi Meir told his young audience that they were thus the guarantees for the Law. On them, therefore, rested the duty of learning and observing as much of it as they could, in order that they might be able to be true to the confidence placed in them as "sureties" for the Law. The future of Judaism was indeed in the hands of the young, for they would afterwards become the men and women whose duty it would be to preserve and practise their faith in the days to come.

Some of Meir's sayings.

Rabbi Meir hated ignorance, and one of his sayings was: "He that gives his daughter to an עַם הָאָרֶץ" (*Am-Ha-Arets*, "a man of the earth"—a Hebrew expression used to denote an ignorant man) "is as though he bound her, and laid her before a lion."

"Love the friend who blames thee, and hate the one who flatters thee; for the former leads to life and the future world, whilst the latter puts thee out of the world," was another wise saying.

The following are some further maxims:—

"When thou art in Rome, do as the Romans do."

"Travellers should go in threes; for a single traveller is likely to be murdered, two are likely to quarrel, but three will always make their way in peace."

"He who does not work on week-days will end by being compelled to work even on Sabbaths. For idleness leads to misery, and misery to crime; and, once a prisoner, the idler will be forced to labour, even on the Sabbath."

"Have less worldly occupation so as to spare more time for the study of the Torah."

"Learn the ways of the Law with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul."

"Better few prayers with devotion than many without it."

Two experiments.

On one occasion a man, who wished to scoff at religion, asked Rabbi Meir how it was possible for God to have divided the upper waters from the lower waters, according to the account of the beginnings of the world given in the first chapter of the Book of Genesis. Meir answered the question by making an experiment with two tumblers of water. He placed one above the other, with the first tumbler top downwards, without spilling the water. "If man can do this, shall not it be possible for God?" said Rabbi Meir. The scoffer then asked how it was that God was confined in a small space when He spoke to Moses. Meir asked the man to look into the concave and convex sides of a curved mirror. "If you," the Rabbi said to him, "can show yourself in whatever form you wish, shall not He, at whose word the world came into existence, *appear* in a very great or very small space as He wishes?"

A "stiff-necked" race.

"Why was the Law given to Israel?" he asked himself once. "Because they are an obstinate people," he replied. "If any other people had gone through what Israel has suffered, they would have given up the Law. The Jewish people may have been 'stiff-necked' in the course of their history in the sense of being obstinate in clinging to idolatry. But they have been stiff-necked in their optimism as well. This has enabled them to preserve their identity

in spite of all the persecution which they have had to endure."

The Rabbi's generosity.

Rabbi Meir's generosity and confidence in God may be illustrated by the fact that, of the three shekels he earned each week, two he spent on his household expenses, and the third he gave to poor fellow-students. When he was asked why he did not save something for his children, Meir replied: "If my children are good, the Lord will provide for them. If my children are not good, they deserve nothing."

Elisha Ben Abuyah.

With all his piety, Meir showed a spirit of great tolerance, and he declared that a heathen who studied the Torah was more worthy than a High Priest who did not do so. His tolerance is best shown by his friendship to Elisha ben Abuyah, who had formerly been his teacher, but afterwards forsook Judaism. In the hope of reclaiming him, he would often associate himself with Elisha. When blamed for learning from Elisha, Rabbi Meir exclaimed: "When I see a juicy pomegranate, I enjoy its contents, and throw away the skin." Elisha (he meant) may not have been an observant Jew; but he had a wide knowledge of the Law, and that Meir could draw upon whilst rejecting his false views. In the course of teaching his pupils, Rabbi Meir was asked by some of them: "If you were to pray for the salvation of any one, for whom would you pray first?" The Rabbi answered: "For my teacher Elisha ben Abuyah first, and then for my father." The pupils expressed surprise at this, and said: "But will you have power to redeem such a Rabbi?" Rabbi Meir answered that, in the event of danger to the Torah, the scroll of the Law was to be rescued, together with the Ark in which it was placed, even on the Sabbath. In the same way he was sure that Elisha, who was learned in the Law, would be saved for the sake of the Torah that was in him.

"*Acher.*"

Elisha was also known by the name of "Acher" (another), because he had turned his back on the past and become quite another kind of man. When he left the Jewish religion, Elisha went round to the various schools and endeavoured to persuade the pupils to give up study. "What benefit is it for you," he would say, "to waste your time on such nonsense? Become builders, and carpenters, and tailors."

Rabbi Meir never despaired, however, of trying to bring his teacher back to Judaism. He saw Elisha once on the Sabbath riding on horseback past the Beth Hamedrash, where the Rabbi was explaining the Law. Meir came out to greet his old teacher, and walked beside him.

An interesting argument.

Elisha was the first to speak, and asked Rabbi Meir: "What was the subject of your discourse to-day?" Meir replied: "I have just been reading the words of Job (xlii. 12): 'So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning,' which meant that his possessions became doubled." Elisha replied: "Rabbi Akiba explained the verse thus: 'God blessed Job at the end because of the good actions of his early days, which still remained with him.'" Then Elisha asked the Rabbi in what the second portion of his discourse consisted, and Meir answered: "'Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof' (Eccles. vii. 8). When a man loses children in the early days of his marriage, but has others remaining with him to bless his old age, then the end of that man's life is surely better than the beginning." Elisha replied: "Your teacher Akiba explained the verse in this way: 'If a man has learned the Law in his youth, forgets it, learns it again in his old age, and then keeps it, his end is better than his beginning.'" Then Meir said that in the same way as gold and glass vessels might be put together again, when broken, by being melted, so people who were once learned, but had lost their knowledge, might retrace their steps and regain what they had lost.

Stealing a bird's nest.

Elisha replied by telling Meir how he had ceased to believe in Judaism. "I once saw," he said, "a man climb a tree and take the mother bird and its young from a nest in disobedience of the Law: 'If a bird's nest chance to be before thee in the way in any tree, or on the ground, . . . thou shalt not take the dam with the young . . . that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days' (Deut. xxii. 6). The man came down quite safely. Then I saw another man climb the tree and take the young from another nest, letting the mother bird go free, as the Law commanded. He, however, fell and died. Did not the Law say, 'That thou mayest prolong thy days'? Where is the happiness and length of days of the man who died? It seems to me that there is no just God." Meir,

who was always ready with an appropriate explanation of passages in the Bible, said that the words, "That it may be well with thee," referred to this world, whilst the words, "And that thou mayest prolong thy days," applied to the world to come. There was thus no inconsistency in the incident to which Elisha had alluded. "The ways of Providence," said Rabbi Meir, "are mysterious, and we must not cease to trust in God because of a small incident, which we do not understand."

Too late!

Elisha then suddenly stopped, and said to Meir: "I have had enough. You must turn back, for I have counted by the steps of my horse that we have reached the limit of a Sabbath day's journey" (2000 cubits). "You turn also," said Meir, wishing Elisha to obey the Sabbath rule as well. But he replied: "No, it is too late—I cannot return to the fold." Rabbi Meir told his pupils that he was still hopeful about his teacher, for Elisha had not forgotten the Law, and the conversation had done him good. One saying of Elisha ben Abuyah is worthy of mention: "What a man learns when a child is like ink written on clean paper. What he learns in his old age is like ink written on paper that has already been used."

Honesty between neighbours.

Like Rabbi Akiba, Meir would often give his pupils lessons in courtesy and consideration for others. Thus he said: "You should not press a neighbour to join you at a meal, if you know that he will not accept the invitation. You should not heap presents on a man when you know for certain that he will not accept them. Do not invite a person to anoint himself with oil when you know the jar is empty. Do not open a cask of wine, and pretend to a guest that it has been specially opened for him, when you have really already opened it to sell from it to a wine-dealer. Do not try to aggravate your friend when he is in a temper. Do not come into his house at the moment of his downfall. And do not try to intrude on his sorrow when he is in trouble."

Birth and death: a pretty custom.

On one occasion Rabbi Meir was reproving some wealthy men for their neglect of duty, and he pointed out to them that they would leave the world no richer than when they entered it. "When a man comes into the world," he said, "his hands are bent inwardly, as if to say: 'The whole world is mine and I will inherit it.' But,

when a man departs this world, his hands are opened out, as if to say: 'I have taken away nothing with me.'" Part of the service at the conclusion of the Sabbath (*Habdalah*) consists in blessing God for the use of fire. The youngest child of the family holds a lighted taper, and the person who says the blessing holds his hands over the flame, at first with his fingers clenched, and then with them open. At first the clenched hands catch the shadow, and then the open hands receive the light of the flame, thus showing the difference between the possession of light and fire and the want of it. But this pretty ceremony may also be taught to mean that people should not hoard their money with tight fists and give none away to other people. For later on, when they die, their hands will be open and empty, and they will then take away nothing from this world, as Rabbi Meir taught.

"A great man and a saint."

Rabbi Meir died in Asia Minor, where he had gone after his quarrel with Simon ben Gamliel. His last year had been saddened by the death of his two sons. Just before he died, he said to his pupils: "Bury me by the shore, so that the sea, which washes the land of my fathers, may touch my bones also." Though, during his life, he had very many enemies, after his death every one praised his virtue and greatness. "He opened the eyes of the wise in the Law" was one remark made about him. And in the funeral sermon recited over his grave it was said of him that "he was a great man and a saint, and was humble withal."

Rabbi Meir's money-box.

In the houses of many pious Jews to this day a money-box is hung up on the wall, bearing Rabbi Meir's name, in which a collection is made for the poor of Palestine. The box has the inscription: "Charity of Rabbi Meir *Baal Nes*." צְדָקָה שֶׁל רִי מֵאִיר בַּעַל נֵם. "Baal Nes" means "master of miracles"; this name was given to Meir on account of the wonderful things he was said to have done. In many places amongst Jews, if any one is married or engaged; loses a relative; is about to start on a journey or has returned from one; does a good stroke of business, or loses money; is about to light the Sabbath lamps; becomes Barmitzvah—in fact on all kinds of occasions—it is the custom to give something to charity. If the charitable gift takes the form of some coins in Rabbi Meir's money-

box, the donor says: "Behold I give this free gift as a charity for the poor of the land of Israel," and the following is recited: "O God of Meir, answer me! May it please Thee, O Lord, our God, and the God of our fathers, as Thou didst hear the prayer of Thy servant Meir, of blessed memory, and wast good to him, so likewise do for me, and for all Thy people Israel. Amen!"

How to remember Rabbi Meir.

We may perhaps remember this grand old Rabbi in other ways as well—by endeavouring to follow some of his fine teaching, and storing up in our "memory-box" a little of the wisdom and the wit, the tolerance and the kindliness, with which the "shedder of light" illumined his own good life, and made brighter and better the lives of his people.

CHAPTER XXXII

90–160 C.E.

STORIES OF THE RABBIS

VI. Simeon ben Yochai. שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן־יוֹחָי

A visit to Akiba in prison.

Rabbi Simeon ben Yochai belonged to the same generation as Rabbi Meir, and was born in Galilee in the second century. He was a pupil of Rabbi Akiba for thirteen years, and was naturally a warm admirer of his great teacher. When Akiba was thrown into prison by the Roman Emperor Hadrian, Simeon, through the influence of his father, who was in favour at the Court at Rome, found his way into the prison, and insisted on Akiba continuing to teach him. When the latter refused, Simeon laughingly threatened to tell his father, who would cause Akiba to be punished more severely.

Simeon arrested.

Early in his career Rabbi Simeon was arrested by the Romans, and sentenced to death. He had been engaged in conversation with two other Rabbis about the Romans. One of them had said: "How useful this nation has been everywhere! It has erected towns with market-places. It has put bridges over rivers, and built bath-houses for preserving health." Simeon replied to this by saying: "What the Romans do, they only do for the sake of selfishness and gain. Their houses are used for bad purposes. They misuse the bathing-places, and levy toll at the bridges." A Roman soldier heard this, and arrested Simeon. He managed to escape, however, and took refuge in a cave with his son Eleazar. There they lived, the story goes, for thirteen years on dates and beans and water.

Escape from the cave.

One day, seeing that a bird had repeatedly escaped the net set for it by a hunter, Rabbi Simeon and his son were encouraged by the example thus set them to leave the

cavern. On leaving the cave, the Rabbi bathed in the warm springs of the city of Tiberias, and cured himself of a disaese which he had contracted in the cave in consequence of not having been able to bathe for so many years. Out of gratitude for this, Simeon changed Tiberias from an "unclean" city to a clean one, by removing the tombs which existed there.

Two bunches of myrtle.

On their way to Tiberias, Rabbi Simeon and his son met an old man hurrying along with two bunches of myrtle in his hand. "What doest thou with these?" they asked him. "To smell in honour of the Sabbath," was the reply. "Would not one bunch have been quite enough for that purpose?" they then asked. "Nay," said the old man, "one is in honour of זָכוֹר—'Remember' the Sabbath, which is the word used in one part of the Bible (Exod. xx. 8), and the other is in honour of שָׁמוֹר—'Keep' the Sabbath, which is the phrase mentioned in another part of the Bible (Deut. v. 12)." Thereupon Rabbi Simeon turned to his son, and said: "Behold how the commandments are regarded by Israel!"

How to catch robbers.

Rabbi Simeon's son, Eleazar, afterwards became the pupil of Rabbi Judah the Prince. His early years in the cave with his father had not left the same feeling of hatred towards the Romans which Rabbi Simeon naturally possessed. Eleazar, in fact, became quite friendly with them, and afterwards acted as their agent in arresting robbers. His appointment to this post came about in the following way. A discussion once arose among the Rabbis as to the best method of catching robbers. Eleazar gave the following as his plan of discovering them: "I get up," he said, "at four o'clock in the morning, and go to the tavern. If I see there a man holding a cup of wine in his hand, half asleep, I inquire how he comes to be there so early in the morning. He may be a scholar, who has been studying all night, and is dozing off. Or, perhaps, he is a working man, who has to be at his work very early. On the other hand, he may be a craftsman, who is engaged in making needles, or some other occupation performed at night time, and has just finished his work. But, if he is neither a scholar nor a workman, I know he must be a robber." The Roman governor heard of Eleazar's plan, and sent the following message to him: "The writer of a

letter should carry out the advice which it contains," meaning that, if he knew how to catch robbers so well, he ought to become a thief-hunter.

"You vinegar, son of wine!"

Eleazar accordingly accepted the position, but this action of his, in arresting robbers on behalf of the Romans, aroused the anger of some of the Rabbis, for the Romans used to hang them. "You vinegar, son of wine!" one of them said to him (meaning, "You bad son of a good father"), "why should you hand over the people of God to these soldiers?" "I am only weeding out the thorns from the vineyard of Israel," replied Eleazar. "Why should you interfere?" said the Rabbi indignantly. "Let the Owner of the Vineyard come and clear His own thorns. Why should you presume to act as the Judge in place of God?"

A deserved rebuke.

When Eleazar had completed his studies, he became somewhat proud. One day, whilst he was travelling homewards, he overtook a man bound in the same direction. The man greeted him, but Eleazar did not return the salute. The man was ugly, and Eleazar asked jestingly: "Are all the people in your town as ugly as you?" The man quietly answered: "Go to the Master who made me, and reproach *Him* for making such an ugly person as I am." Eleazar at once saw that he was at fault. Descending from his ass, he asked the man to pardon him. But the stranger replied again that he should go to the Master who made him. Eleazar then humbly followed the man on foot all the way praying to be forgiven. When they reached the city, the citizens came out and greeted Eleazar, saying: "Welcome, our Rabbi and Teacher!" The strange man called out to them, however: "Do you call that man 'Rabbi'? May there be very few like him among us." He then told them of Eleazar's treatment of him. The citizens begged him to pardon Eleazar, because of his great knowledge and wisdom, and this he then did.

Some of Rabbi Simeon's sayings.

"There are three crowns," said Rabbi Simeon. "The first is that of scholarship, the second that of the priesthood, the third that of royalty; but the crown of a good name mounts above them all." Simeon once declared that, if he had been on Mount Sinai when the Law was given to Israel, he would have asked for two mouths for

man, one to be used exclusively as a means for repeating, and thus learning the Torah. "But then," he added, "how great also would be the evil done by bad people with two mouths!"

"One should throw oneself into a burning furnace rather than shame a neighbour in public," was another of his sayings, as were also the following:

"If people sit down to a meal without uttering a few words of the Law, and thus providing food for the mind and soul, as well as for the body, it is as if they had eaten of the sacrifices of the dead. If they *do* repeat some words of the Law, it is as if they had eaten at the table of the Lord."

"So great is the power of repentance that, however wicked a man has been during his lifetime, if he but repent towards the end, he is considered a perfectly righteous man."

Two ships.

"Two ships," said Rabbi Simeon, "were once bound together with strong chains and metal plates, and a palace was built on top of them. So long as the ships kept together, the palace held fast. Once they separated, the palace fell to pieces. In the same way the palace of Heaven rests on the unity of Israel. Its faith can only rest on a solid and united foundation."

The king and his son.

Rabbi Simeon was once asked why the manna was given to the children of Israel in the wilderness every day, and why it could not have been given to them all at once for a whole year. The Rabbi replied: "There was once a king who had a son, to whom he made an allowance once a year sufficient to last for the whole year. The result was that the son only came to see him once a year, when he received his money. The king, therefore, gave him a daily allowance instead, so that the son should come to see him every day. In the same way manna was given by God every day to the children of Israel, in order to make them turn their hearts to Him every day."

The story of the hole in the boat.

On another occasion Rabbi Simeon said to his pupils that the whole of the community was to blame if any single member committed a sin. "Why is this?" they asked. "I will tell you a story," replied the Rabbi. "There was once a boat full of people. A man suddenly

took a piercer, and began to bore a hole through the bottom of the boat. The frightened passengers cried to him: 'What are you doing?' 'Be quiet,' replied he. 'I am only digging a hole underneath my own seat. *You* are not affected.' 'Stop,' they replied, 'for the water will come in, and drown us as well as you. We are, indeed, very much affected by your reckless action.' So it is with one man's bad conduct. It affects others as well. This, therefore, should make us careful when we propose taking a wrong step in life, or commit a bad deed."

A "star" of the Talmud.

With this excellent advice we must take leave of Rabbi Simeon. Some people think that he was the same man as Bar Cochba, the leader of the revolt against the Romans in the time of Rabbi Akiba, and that he had to dwell in the cave to escape his enemies. He is also thought to be the author of part of the *Zohar*, the curious book of the "Cabbalists." But, whether Rabbi Simeon was or was not the "son of a star," we can certainly include him among the "stars" of the Talmud firmament. For, even if he had only left behind him his saying about "the crown of a good name," and his story of the hole in the boat, we should still wish to preserve his memory and his teaching among these "Stories of the Rabbis."

CHAPTER XXXIII

135–220 C.E.

STORIES OF THE RABBIS

VII. Judah the Prince. יְהוּדָה הַנָּשִׂיא

"Rabbi."

On the day that Rabbi Akiba met his martyr's death at the stake, with the *Shema* on his lips, there was born the last of the *Tannaim*, or "Reciters" of the Mishna—Rabbi Judah, who was destined to complete the work of those who had lived before him. "Before one sun set," as the Rabbis put it, "another arose." He was afterwards called (like Hillel and his descendants, who were Heads of the Sanhedrin before Judah) *Ha-Nasi* ("the Prince"), both because he was a descendant of King David on his mother's side (on his father's side he belonged to the tribe of Benjamin), and also because he was recognised by the Romans as the chief of the Jews in Palestine. He became so famous, and his decisions were received with so much respect, that, in addition to being called "the Prince," he was called simply "Rabbi." He was also called "the Holy," on account of the simplicity and holiness of his life. It was said of him, too, that "Judah's cattle-stalls are worth more than the treasure chambers of the King of Persia," and "If the Messiah were upon earth, he would be like Judah; and if the latter might be compared with the departed saints, he would be like Daniel the Beloved." He spent his early days in the city of Usha, where Rabbi Meir had taught. In his house the purest Hebrew was spoken, and the choice speech of the "maids of the House of Rabbi" became quite famous.

An exchange of babies.

The infant Judah was circumcised, according to Jewish law, when he was eight days old, in spite of the Roman law forbidding the ceremony. The fact that this had been

done reached the ears of the Roman Emperor, and he summoned the parents to appear before him, and bring with them the infant. Upon their arrival in Rome, the distressed mother at once called upon the Empress, who was her friend, and asked her to help them to escape the peril which awaited them. The Empress was moved with compassion and tender sympathy for her friend. With true motherly wit she hit upon a plan, which answered well. Her Majesty, having also an infant son named Antoninus,[1] who was about the same age as young Judah, proposed to the agonised mother to exchange children for the time being. The plan succeeded, and the Emperor thought that his decree had been obeyed. Antoninus and Judah, who thus came in contact when they were but babies, afterwards became friends for the remainder of their lives, and many interesting stories are told of their friendship.

Rabbi's love affair.

We have already read, in the course of these "Stories of the Rabbis," of one love-story, in which Rabbi Akiba was concerned. Rabbi Judah the Prince was one of the parties in an other "love affair." This did not occur in his youth, like that of Akiba, but when he was getting on in years, and after his first wife had died. The lady of his second choice was also not young. She was the widow of Rabbi Eleazar, the son of Rabbi Simeon ben Yochai. We learn that she was of respectable family, and that her father was a wealthy man. She was a model wife to Rabbi Eleazar, and we are told that she was an excellent cook and a good nurse. Her husband was ill for a long time before his death, and his wife spent all her dowry on making him comfortable. Her resources and ingenuity in the kitchen must have been very great, for she cooked for him daily a number of different kinds of tempting dainties.

A Jewish heroine.

"A Jew without a wife is no man," said the Rabbis. Old and young were alike to marry. Rabbi Judah, therefore, old as he was, was bound to marry. But why did he court the old widow rather than an old maid or young girl? As marriage was considered a duty, there would be very

[1] This "Antoninus" is thought by some modern scholars to be the famous Marcus Aurelius; by others to be Antoninus Pius; and by others again to be Septimus Severus, Caracalla, Lucius Verus, &c. His exact identity still remains uncertain.

few of either of these two classes unmarried. Rabbi Eleazar's widow was probably considered a desirable "match" on account of her knowledge. Riches Judah did not want, and "if a person has knowledge, he has everything; if he has no knowledge, he has nothing." "He alone is poor who is not possessed of knowledge," said the Rabbis. "As a rule," says the Talmud, "a woman is more desirous of being married than a man." Rabbi Judah's love-affair provides an exception to this rule. In her lonely widowhood and poverty the greatest man of his day offered the widow of Rabbi Eleazar his hand and his heart, with all the comforts of a palace. But such was her unfading love for the memory of her dead husband that she persistently rejected the princely suitor, with all his tempting inducements, and is thus entitled to a place in the ranks of Jewish heroines. She remained sacred to the last to the memory of her first love, Rabbi Eleazar ben Simeon, for he excelled, as she said, in "good works."

Judah's suit rejected.

But Rabbi was not yet to be turned away from his desire, and he pleaded: "Granted that thy husband excelled me in knowledge of the Law, yet, in good works, who is greater than I?" Her reply to this was: "Whether he excelled thee in knowledge, I know not, but I know that he surpassed thee in good works, for he suffered much in his body, in order that he might be of use to the poor." The parties in Rabbi Judah's little love-affair did not, like Akiba and Rachel, live "happily ever afterwards." For his suit was rejected, and the poor widow preferred to live alone, with the memory of her husband, than become the wife of him of whom it was said: "From the days of Moses unto Rabbi, we find not learning and riches combined in one person."

Princely generosity.

Rabbi seems to have won the favour of the Roman rulers, and he was enabled to make good use of the wealth which he was fortunate enough to possess. His clothes were made of such beautiful, fine cotton that, it was said, if they were rolled together, they would occupy the size of only a nut and a half. His scents were costly, and his servants as numerous as those used in the royal palaces. He himself, however, lived quite simply at the city of Sepphoris. With the generosity which is one of the privileges of princes, he gathered round him a number

of pupils, whom he supported entirely at his own cost. At a time of famine this Jewish Prince and Rabbi threw open his storehouses, and distributed corn to the needy, as did Joseph in the days of old in Egypt.

Kindness to animals.

Rabbi had a warm corner in his heart for animals, and he would often be moved to tears at their suffering. On one occasion a calf, which was being led to the slaughtering-block, ran to him as if seeking protection. "Go," said Rabbi, "for thou hast been created for this purpose." Afterwards, accusing himself of want of mercy for the suffering animal, he attributed to this his years of illness, which he bore with great resignation. Once, when his daughter was about to kill a small animal which was in her way, he said: "Let it live, child, for it is written (in Psalm cxlv. 9), 'The Lord is good to all: and His tender mercies are over *all* His works.'" Rabbi's gratitude to God for his own life appears in the blessing which he said, when eating meat or eggs: "Blessed be the Lord who has created many things, in order to support by them every living being."

Rabbi's meekness.

Rabbi Judah was a very meek and humble man, to whom "conceit" and "boastfulness" were strange qualities. He always tried to put the virtues of others above his own. He used to say: "I am prepared to do anything reasonable that any man may ask me to do." Though he was the chief of all the Rabbis of his time, he would rise when he saw a Rabbi named Huna, who was much inferior to him in position. Rabbi explained that Huna was a member of the tribe of Judah, whereas he himself, on his father's side, only belonged to that of Benjamin. He thought it, therefore, his duty to pay respect to a man whose descent gave him a higher claim for the position of leader in Israel.

A present of great value.

On one occasion Rabbi received, as a present from a non-Jew, a pearl of great value. He sent in return a *Mezuzah* (the little parchment scroll affixed to the doors of houses inhabited by Jews and containing verses from the Bible). His friend thought that this was an unworthy gift, as his own present was of such priceless value. Rabbi Judah replied that not only was his present precious above all the possessions of them both, but it had a great advantage over the valuable pearl. The pearl had to be guarded, whereas *his* present would guard its possessor.

"Which road should a man choose?"

"Which road should a man choose?" asked Rabbi Judah. "One which is creditable to the traveller and honourable in the eyes of mankind," he replied. "Be as exact," he continued, "in thine observance of the minor precepts as of the most important, for thou knowest not what reward is attached to each command. Balance the loss which thou mightest sustain in consequence of the performance of a duty with the reward in a higher sense, which thou wilt receive in doing good and being strictly just and honourable. Bear always three things in mind, so that thou commit no offence: There is an Eye that sees all, an Ear that hears all, and a Hand that inscribes all thy deeds in a book!"

A prayer.

Rabbi privately recited every day a prayer, which is now included in the Jewish daily prayer-book. "May it be Thy Will, my God and the God of my fathers, to protect me against impudent men and against being impudent in manner or word, from bad men and bad companions, from evil inclinations, from a difficult trial and a hard opponent, whether he be a son of the Covenant or not" —Jew or Gentile. Although he was protected by the Emperor's grace, he still prayed to be protected by God rather than by man.

Soft tongues.

Rabbi Judah was a great lover of peace; and he used often to explain to his pupils what an important matter it was to live at peace and in a friendly way with their companions. One day he made a feast for them, and ordered, as one of the courses, tongues of different kinds. There were soft tongues and hard tongues. The pupils commenced to pick out the soft ones, and left alone those which were hard. "What you are doing now," then said the Rabbi to the pupils, "I trust that you will do always. In the same way as you select the soft tongues and leave the hard ones, even so should you always use a gentle tongue and spurn hard speech when you speak to your friends."

ANTONINUS

(Bust in the Museum of Naples)

CHAPTER XXXIV

STORIES OF THE RABBIS

Judah the Prince (*continued*)

The Emperor's underground passage.

The Emperor Antoninus, with whom, it will be remembered, Judah came in contact when they were both babies, afterwards became a very close friend of Rabbi, and their names have been associated in many a story and anecdote. Antoninus, it is said, afterwards became a Jew as a result of his intercourse with his friend, and even lived with him for some time. The Emperor, in order to be able secretly to communicate with Rabbi, had built an underground passage, leading from his palace to Rabbi's house. Antoninus used to send, day by day, through this tunnel, a leather bag full of gold, on the top of which he placed sheaves of wheat, saying to his slave: "Carry this bag of wheat to the house of Rabbi." The latter one day said to the Emperor: "Why dost thou send me gold? I am rich enough, and need it not." Antoninus replied: "Bequeath it to thy descendants, who, in order to avoid persecution, will have to pay dearly to my successors."

Obverse *Reverse*

COIN OF ANTONINUS PIUS

Obverse:—Latin words with name of Antoninus Pius, and his bust. *Reverse*:—Latin words for Ælia Capitolina (Jerusalem). Bacchus, standing, holding bunch of grapes and spear; at his feet a panther.

Hidden treasure and wisdom.

The Emperor used to meet the Rabbi in the passage, and, in order that no one might know of the meetings, he adopted the cruel practice of killing one of the two slaves who accompanied him when he arrived, and the other

when he returned. Evidently his companionship with the Jewish sage had not succeeded in converting him from the barbarous notions of his age, when among the Romans human life was held cheaply indeed. What untold treasure might not this underground passage unfold to us, if we but knew its position! And what riches in wit and wisdom, in repartee and the teaching of Judaism, might it not reveal to us, if its walls could have preserved those secret conversations between the Roman Emperor and his Rabbi friend!

Something missing.

Rabbi invited Antoninus to dine with him one Sabbath, when all the dishes were cold. After some time, Rabbi again had the Emperor as his guest at dinner. This time he came on a week day, when warm food was served. Antoninus, however, expressed his preference for the food he had enjoyed at Rabbi's table on the Sabbath, although it was cold. "Ah!" said the Rabbi, "there is something missing to-day, which we cannot procure. The necessary spices are wanting to make the dishes enjoyable." "But," replied Antoninus, "surely my wealth can procure anything. I have spices enough in my stores." "No," answered Rabbi, "the Sabbath is the spice which made my cold dishes so enjoyable, and that your means cannot procure."

Why not pray every hour?

Antoninus frequently put questions in which he tried to belittle Judaism, and catch Rabbi tripping. For instance, he one day said: "Should not a man pray every hour?" Rabbi replied that this was not at all necessary. Antoninus pretended, however, to disagree. After a while Rabbi called on Antoninus, and was careful, as always, to address him with great politeness. After about an hour, he called once more, and addressed the Emperor again carefully, with all the titles he was accustomed to use. Rabbi Judah repeated his visits at intervals of about an hour every day. At last Antoninus told him that he did not feel at all honoured by his frequent visits, which, in fact, became quite a burden. "Therein," said the wise Rabbi, "lies my reason for telling you that man should not address the Throne of Mercy every hour, as such frequency savours of contempt."

The story of the blind and lame men.

Rabbi was once asked by the Emperor whether, in the future world, it was not possible for the wicked to plead

that their sins were committed by their bodies, and that, since they were now souls without bodies, they should no longer be held to be guilty. Rabbi replied by telling the Emperor a story. "A king once possessed a garden, which contained all kinds of choice fruit-trees. He set as watchers over the garden a blind and a lame man. The latter wished to taste the tempting fruit, but, owing to his deformity, he was unable to climb the tree to satisfy his appetite. The blind man also could not gratify his desire, as, although he could smell the delicious fruit, he could not see the tree which contained it. They conferred together. Finally, the blind man suggested that his friend should stand on his shoulders, and thus reach the fruit on the tree. They did this, and their united efforts proved successful."

Punished as one man.

Some days afterwards the King came to the garden. Missing his finest fruits, he asked the watchers where they had gone. The lame man said: "I could not get at them, for I cannot walk." And the blind man replied: "I cannot even see them, so that I could not possibly have taken any." But the King saw what had happened, and, placing the lame man on the shoulders of his blind colleague, he punished them as one man. "So it is with man's body and his soul," continued Rabbi, "you cannot separate the one from the other. On the day of judgment the soul and body will be punished together."

Bar Kappara's riddle.

One of Rabbi Judah's pupils was named Bar Kappara. He was somewhat of a wit, and, like some schoolboys of to-day of whom we have heard, he was fond occasionally of having a joke at the expense of his master. Bar Kappara had been well taught by Rabbi Judah; he was a learned man, and possessed a large store of parables. In contrast to him was a son-in-law of Rabbi Judah, who was very rich indeed, but at the same time an ignorant man. He used to parade his wealth before the pupils of Rabbi Judah. This they naturally resented. Bar Kappara especially disliked him, and seized every opportunity of playing a trick upon him. On one occasion he said: "Why do you sit in the company of these scholars, like a dumb animal, whilst all the others are asking questions, and discussing matters with Rabbi? Let me give you a riddle, which no wise man will ever disclose." The foolish

son-in-law allowed himself to be persuaded, and learnt the following riddle:—

"High from heaven her eye looks down.
Constant strife excites her frown.
Winged beings shun her sight.
Youth she puts to instant flight.
The aged, too, her aspect scout.
'Oh, oh!' the fugitive cries out.
And by her snares whoe'er is lured
Shall never more from sin be cured."

The meaning of the riddle.

The son-in-law did not understand the riddle. But he nevertheless asked the scholars the meaning of it before his father-in-law. Of course Rabbi Judah followed it, and saw the satire in it. The "eye," looking down from heaven, was Rabbi's haughty son-in-law, whose "frown" excited "constant strife." The "winged beings," or learned men, shunned his sight, because he was so proud of his riches. "Youth" was afraid of him, because he was Rabbi's son-in-law. And "the aged," too, feared him for the same reason. The other learned men smiled whilst the riddle was being put. Rabbi Judah, however, was very angry that his son-in-law was put to shame in the presence of such a large company.

A feast of stories.

Soon afterwards Rabbi gave a large banquet. In order to punish his pupil for what he considered an insult, he invited all the wise men with the exception of Bar Kappara. The latter was naturally upset at this slight. He went to the banqueting-hall, and wrote on the gate: "240,000,000 shekels have been spent on these festivities, but they have not invited Bar Kappara. If such be done to those who act contrary to God's will, what will be done to those who follow His bidding?" Rabbi acknowledged his mistake after the banquet, and gave orders for a splendid repast to be prepared in honour of Bar Kappara. The pupil could not, however, resist having another hit at his master. This time he wrote on the gate: "If those who do God's will are so treated in this world, how much greater will be their lot in the world to come?" Still, he was not quite reconciled. At the feast he commenced to tell the invited guests a host of stories and fables. The result was that, instead of partaking of the good things laid before them,

they were so interested in Bar Kappara's funny tales that all the food was left—much to the annoyance of Rabbi Judah.

As Bar Kappara was once strolling along the sea-beach, near the city of Cæsarea, he saw a man, almost naked, who had just saved himself from a shipwreck. Bar Kappara approached him, took him home, fed and clothed him, gave him a few pieces of silver for travelling expenses, and accompanied him part of the way. Some time afterwards a neighbouring nation attacked some of the cities of Palestine, and seized many Jews for the purpose of selling

"Cast thy bread upon the waters."

Obverse *Reverse*

COIN ISSUED UNDER THE ROMAN EMPEROR DOMITIAN

Obverse:—Greek words with name of Domitian, and his head.
Reverse:—Greek words with name of Agrippa. Turreted female standing on the prow of a vessel, holding in right hand ears of corn, and in left a cornucopiæ.

them as slaves. Bar Kappara was selected as ambassador to go to the King and ask for the release of the captives, for which purpose he was given 500 silver pieces as ransom. When Bar Kappara came to the King, he was amazed to find that the man whom he had helped after the shipwreck was vizier to the King. The vizier at once recognised him, and asked what his business was with the King. Bar Kappara told him the object of his visit, and, through the intervention of the vizier, the Jews were released, and the 500 pieces of silver were presented to Bar Kappara. Thereupon Bar Kappara quoted the words of the Bible: "Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days" (Eccles. xi. 1).

On the whole, Rabbi liked his pupil, by whom he was entertained, although he did not always approve of his

A prophecy fulfilled.

fun. But Bar Kappara's jokes still continued. On the occasion of the wedding of a daughter of Rabbi, Bar Kappara wagered the foolish son-in-law (of riddle fame) that he would drink a cup of wine which should be filled by his mother-in-law (Rabbi's wife), and that Rabbi himself should dance in his presence whilst he did so. In the course of the festivities Bar Kappara asked Rabbi the meaning of a certain word in the Law. Rabbi explained it in various ways, but Bar Kappara disregarded all his explanations. Rabbi thereupon said to him: "Now *you* tell me what it is." The jester said: "Very well. Let your wife fill me a cup of wine. You have a dance in honour of your son-in-law, and I will meanwhile think over this verse." Rabbi, not knowing of the wager, did as was suggested. Thus the wager was won, and the foolish son-in-law was so angry that he went away from the banquet.

"Oh, my ear!"

Bar Kappara was not the only man who tried to get the better of Rabbi Judah. A Persian once called on him, and asked him to instruct him in the Jewish faith. Rabbi naturally commenced by showing him the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The Persian wanted to argue with him, and asked: "How do you know that this letter is called *Aleph?*" The Rabbi pinched his ear by way of a reply, and the Persian cried, "Oh, my ear!" "How do you know," asked the Rabbi, "that this is an ear?" The Persian was thus paid back in his own coin. He was pleased by this witty retort to his own doubting, and commenced to acquire a knowledge of the Jewish Law.

Rabbi's death.

Rabbi's death caused much grief all over the country. It is said that on his deathbed he held up his ten fingers, saying: "I have not enjoyed more of the luxuries of this world than these ten fingers could have brought me by daily labour with them." On the day of his burial there were funeral orations throughout the Jewish communities in all countries.

The editor of the Mishna.

Rabbi Judah the Prince will always be remembered as the man who, about the year 220 C.E., completed the Mishna—that wonderful collection of Jewish traditional laws, of which we have already spoken. He thus finished the work which Hillel had commenced and Akiba had continued. "Open thy mouth and read," he said to one

of his pupils, "open thy mouth and study; for only by living speech is study advanced." Rabbi Judah put into order the decisions and writings of the Rabbis who had gone before him, and thus prepared the way for the completion, three centuries later, of the Talmud, of which the Mishna forms a part. His "road," at all events, was "creditable to the traveller, and honourable in the eyes of mankind." Rabbi Judah fully deserved all the titles which were given him. He was, in truth, a "Prince"—in kindness and generosity to his fellow-men and to dumb animals. He was *the* "Rabbi" of his time in his great scholarship, which enabled him to be the compiler of the Mishna. His gentleness and meekness, modesty, simplicity, and trust in God merited the title "Holy." The proverb "Put not your trust in Princes" was certainly not meant to apply to people like Judah *Ha-Nasi*.

"We can make our lives sublime."

The foregoing have comprised an account of the lives and work and teachings of some of the most important of the Rabbis of the Talmud. We have met with pretty love-stories and the heroic deaths of martyrs; with the widest generosity and tolerance, and the highest degree of unselfishness; with the best type of modest, gentle lives; and with a wit and wisdom seldom equalled. They have provided the Jewish people—and indeed all peoples—throughout the ages with patterns of noble, unselfish, scholarly lives. And of them we can say with all truth and sincerity—

"Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time."

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IMPORTANT DATES IN JEWISH HISTORY[1]

ON WHICH EVENTS REFERRED TO IN THIS VOLUME TOOK PLACE

Before the Christian Era

586. The Jews taken captive to Babylon.
537. Cyrus permits them to return to Palestine under Zerubbabel.
458. Ezra goes to Jerusalem.
444. Nehemiah joins him.
332. Alexander the Great conquers the then known world.
320. Alexander dies, and his empire divided among his generals.
300. Simon the Just, the last of the men of the Great Synagogue, dies.
175. Antiochus Epiphanes becomes King of Syria.
167. The Temple desecrated by Antiochus, and Mattathias and his sons commence the revolt.
166. Judas Maccabeus takes command of the Judean forces.
165. Battle of Emmaus.
164. The Temple dedicated and the Feast of Chanukah instituted.
163. Death of Antiochus.
160. Death of Judas. Jonathan appointed leader.
152. Jonathan becomes High Priest.
142. Death of Jonathan; Simon becomes High Priest and Prince.
135. Simon murdered. John Hyrcanus ruler.
104. John Hyrcanus dies. His wife and sons succeed him.
70. Birth of Hillel.
62. Pompey conquers Jerusalem. Antipater the Idumean appointed Governor of Judea.
37. Herod the Great, King of Judea.

[1] Some of the dates here given are of course approximate only, but they may be taken to be as nearly accurate as is possible from consultation with the available data.

24. The Temple rebuilt.
20. Philo of Alexandria born.
10. Birth of Rabban Jochanan ben Zakkai.
4. Herod's death. Jesus of Nazareth born.

After the Commencement of the Christian Era

7. Judea becomes a Roman province.
10. Death of Hillel.
33. Jesus crucified.
37. Flavius Josephus born.
40. Philo's embassy to Caligula.
53. Rabbi Akiba born.
66. The rebellion under Josephus and John of Gischala.
70. Siege of Jerusalem. Destruction of the Temple. Rabban Jochanan ben Zakkai founds his school at Jabneh.
90. Death of Rabban Jochanan ben Zakkai. Birth of Rabbis Meir and Simeon ben Yochai.
90–135. Rabbi Joshua ben Chananya and Rabbi Akiba the leading Rabbis in Judea.
132. Bar Cochba's revolt.
135. Death of Rabbi Akiba. Birth of Rabbi Judah the Prince.
136–160. Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Simeon ben Yochai the leading Rabbis in Judea.
220. Completion of the Mishna by Rabbi Judah the Prince. His death.
300. The Jerusalem Talmud completed.
500. The Babylonian Talmud finally completed.

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